

PLUCK AND LUCK

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DRIVEN ASHORE IN LOST LATITUDE OR, THE STRANGE STORY OF THE SKELETON ISLAND.

By CAPT THOSH WILSON
AND OTHER STORIES



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Then a flash of vivid lightning showed to all as plain as day the form of a man on the after rail. One moment he wavered there Then another flash showed him falling into the sea.



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Driven Ashore In Lost Latitudes

OR, THE STRANGE STORY OF THE SKELETON ISLAND

BY CAPT. THOS. H. WILSON

CHAPTER I.—On Board the Syril.

A dead calm was upon the sea. It was in the log watch, and hot and stifling the sun beat down upon the bosom of the vast expanse of water. At every available spot upon the deck of the steamer Syril, tramp and fruiterer and general trader from San Francisco for Honolulu, awnings were spread. And beneath them crew as well as passengers were idly lying. Indeed, so intense was the equatorial humidity that it was scarcely deemed safe for a man to go aloft in the sun's glare. Two of the crew were already in the surgeon's care from overheating. The vast Pacific looked like a mirror of glass.

Indeed, so complete was the assimilation between ocean and sky at the horizon line that the steamer seemed to be imbedded in one vast limitless body of cerulean blue. Many of the passengers lounged in hammocks or chairs and slept. Others were engaged in reading or in light games, like whist or chess. Apart from the others, however, and near a crevice in the canvas awning stood two young men. They were of noticeable appearance in the way of contrast if nothing else.

One was a brunette, dark and handsome, with curling black mustache and a slight imperial whisker. There was an air about him one might have called Hamlet-like, another Mephistophelian. Dressed in dark clothes, he looked almost a prince of darkness. The other was a blonde, with curling Saxon hair, merry blue eyes and honest features. He was dressed in light Scotch tweed. They had never met before coming aboard the steamer. Being kindred spirits in the matter of youthful tastes, they had at once affiliated. The first young man, the brunette, had written his name upon the steamer's list as Harland Myers, New York. The other, as Tom Crawford of the same city. For some weeks on board the steamer the two youths had been warm friends. Yet never had one ventured an inquiry of the other as to his social standing, or his place of residence in the American metropolis, or even his business. Myers had seemed particularly averse to any subject of the kind and Crawford had shared the same feeling. "Tell you what, Crawford!" Myers was saying between the puffs at his cigar. "I shall be glad to see port. We have now been six weeks out of San Francisco. I shall be glad to see Honolulu."

"Which I think we will before long," said Tom.

"I don't believe it; at least not for another week. Our captain means to do some more trading in a little archipelago below here."

"Well, I am rather sorry now that I didn't take a regular mail steamer for Hawaii."

"So am I. Yet I have enjoyed the trip much. Especially lucky am I to have met so charming a fairy as Miss Myrtle True."

Crawford smiled and Myers shot a peculiar glance at him. Their eyes met. Each saw the light of rivalry in the other's eyes.

"But that old ogre of a parent will persist in keeping an eye on the fair one," growled Myers. "See, he is even now by her side."

Both glanced across the deck. Just in the shadow of the forward cabin was a young girl seated in a steamer chair. She was slender, petite and of rare beauty. By her side was the ogre, a pleasant-featured old man. Albion True, a retired banker of the Golden Gate, was doing the orient with his charming daughter Myrtle. He had taken a queer dislike to Myers and had treated his advances coolly, which had warranted the latter's appellation of ogre. But just at this moment the attention of the young men was claimed by a peculiar sight. A huge bird had come fluttering down out of the blue ether and perched upon the tip of the mainmast. It was an albatross, a monster of its species, and there it perched with an eerie cry. Everybody turned a gaze upward. The passengers looked up through the crevices in the awnings. The sailors looked at the bird of omen with something like pallor upon their rough faces.

In the eyes of the seafaring man, the albatross is a bird possessed of supernatural powers. The present visit was not regarded altogether as a good omen. Tom Crawford and Harland Myers, with the others, gazed up at the big bird. Almost instantly Myers drew a revolver from his hip pocket and cried:

"Upon my word, Tom, there is a good shot. I will wager you a bottle of champagne I can bring him."

"N—no!" gasped Crawford. "It won't do. You must not—"

But he ceased speaking. Myers had laughed loudly and recklessly, and drawing aim, pulled the trigger. The pistol spoke sharply. The albatross fluttered for a moment and then fell to the deck of the ship with vainly beating wings. The shot was a good one, but the effect was thrilling. A loud, horrified cry went up, and the sailors came rushing forward. Every passenger was upon his

feet. Loud and excited were the ejaculations. Upon the deck of the ship lay the huge bird. The rough sailors flocked forward with horror depicted upon their faces, and shooting angry glances at the indiscreet marksman.

"Great guns, man!" almost screamed the mate, Jack King, with purple face. "Why did ye do that? There's fate enough agin us without tempting more."

"Toss him overboard!"

"Rope's end him!"

"Ye can't save the ship. We're all bound fer Davy Jones' locker now!"

These were the excited exclamations of the sailors. But the captain and mate seized marline spikes and drove them back. Else it was certain that they would have done the dark young man harm. Myers did not seem in fear, however, though he evinced great surprise.

"What's the matter with all you idiots?" he cried. "What have I done out of the way?"

"A thundering greenhorn!" cried the captain.

"Great sharks, man!" cried Jack King. "Don't ye know that the albatross is the sailors' great friend, and if ye kill one of 'em the ship is sure never to reach port?"

"You have been very unwise, Myers," said Tom Crawford in an undertone. "These sailors have their superstitions, you know."

"Nonsense!" cried Myers contemptuously, "that is the essence of fools' wit. Because I happened to shoot that bird the ship is doomed. Well, well, what an idiotic idea!"

A low, sullen murmur arose from the knot of sailors. The situation would have become serious but for the captain and mate, who tossed the carcass of the bird overboard and drove the men back to their quarters. This ended the episode, but it could hardly be said that the passengers felt comfortable as they returned to their seats. Unanimous was the verdict against the unnecessary and brutal act of Myers, without confessing to any superstitious fear.

"Come below!" said Crawford, drawing Myers away. "I have some good cigars in my stateroom, and really I think a little brandy will steady our nerves."

There was a lurid light in Myers's eyes.

"My nerves are all right," he declared sullenly. "Really I never saw the equal of those men for idiocy. If one of them had dared to utter another word of insult I'd have shot him on the spot, really I would."

The purple hue upon Myers's face, and the gleam of his eyes, betrayed the vengeful disposition underneath. Crawford shivered, he knew not why. However, both repaired to the stateroom, and the brandy and cigars were produced. By an open port each sat opposite the other. There was no air, but the side of the ship was at least in shadow. The conversation turned upon various subjects, until at length Myers fixed a penetrating gaze upon Crawford and said:

"Really, Crawford, you cannot know how that affair stirred me up. I could kill every one of those beastly dogs and cut them into pieces."

Tom Crawford looked his horror. Myers parted his lips in a cruel smile and continued:

"I know I cannot help that feeling. It is my disposition. Revenge is the nearest thing to the

heart of a Myers. For generations the family have been predisposed that way, and the laws of the vendetta is the shrine at which we all worship. Not one of our race but has had some deadly mission of revenge to accomplish."

"But is that spirit in keeping with the beautiful teachings of Christianity?" asked Crawford with a peculiar thrill of aversion.

In that moment a sort of instinctive fear, a loathing of the villain before him, came into his heart. He did not at the moment realize the significance of Myers's declaration. He little dreamed of the terrible sequence of events so near at hand. Myers looked at him steadily.

"It may not be in keeping with Christianity or any other narrow creed," said Myers coldly, "but nevertheless it is a part of my nature. Woe to the man or woman who crosses my path. The motto of the family is: 'Do not step on me or I will strike,' with a venomous serpent emblazoned."

Crawford shifted uneasily in his seat. He thought then of Myrtle True. Had the villain any reference to her in his implied threat?

"Indeed!" said Tom frigidly, "I am sorry for you, Mr. Myers. I am afraid your disposition will bring you to grief some time."

"How so?" asked Myers curtly.

"The lion, roaring about seeking what he may devour, may stand a chance of being devoured himself."

They looked steadily at each other. Then Myers's features relaxed and he smiled sardonically.

"I see that you are not afraid of me," he said.

"Not a particle," replied Tom. "Bluster does not frighten me."

Myers's face flushed, but he did not seem to lose his equanimity.

"Let me tell you of the mission of my life," he said in a constrained voice, "then you will understand that perhaps I have a reason for my madness. The legacy left me by my father was not altogether desirable, yet too sacred to fling away."

"My father was Edward Myers, a prosperous broker of New York. He wooed and wedded a brilliant New York belle, and I was the only child. But when I was born my mother died. My father being free again married a second time. This second wife was not happy with him. My father speedily learned that her heart was elsewhere."

"She really loved another man, a fascinating society leader, by name Nathaniel Crawford. Did you ever hear the name before?"

The burning gaze of Myers was fixed upon Tom, who simply returned it and made reply:

"That was my father's name."

Something like a hiss escaped the dark youth's lips. For a moment Tom Crawford half feared that he would spring upon him.

CHAPTER II.—In Lost Latitudes.

It was a thrilling moment. Crawford had instinctively made up his mind what he should do if Myers sprung upon him. He regarded the fellow as half mad. But Myers seemed to restrain himself by a powerful effort.

"It is possible that it was not the same Na-

thaniel Crawford," he said in a steely tone. "Let me first tell you what he did to my father. False friend that he was, he betrayed his confidence, and in an ill-advised moment sought to lure his wife away from him. They met one dark night at the Fifth avenue entrance to Central Park. My father followed his false wife and saw the clandestine meeting. They had quarreled but an hour before. My father saw that it was Crawford's purpose to entice his wife away, so he stepped up and shot her dead. He would then have shot the base deceiver but that officers sprung upon and overpowered him. For this brave execution of his rightful revenge my father went to his death on the gallows at Sing Sing, while Crawford, the base deceiver and the cause of all, went free. Was it not terrible?"

Tom Crawford drew himself up like a young giant; the light which burned in his honest blue eyes was strong and resolute. Well he knew the story of his father's early life. It was before his marriage and his (Tom's) birth. The affair had created a decided sensation, but Nathaniel Crawford had been exonerated of all blame. His meeting with Mrs. Myers that night was proved to have been purely accidental. He had been on his way home from his club, when the distraught woman met him. She recognized in him a former friend, and in the distress of the moment besought his counsel, telling him of the quarrel with her husband. Crawford's advice had been honorable and wise, which was to return to her home. But at that moment out of the darkness stepped the assassin and shot her dead. Tremendous was the sensation created. Myers came in for no sympathy whatever, but was hanged at Sing Sing. This story Tom was well familiar with. He read the heart of the youth before him. He knew that he was under oath to win revenge for the fancied wrong. He knew that he was face to face with a deadly enemy, and one who actually sought his life.

"Of this awful wrong I knew nothing about," continued Myers, "until I was fifteen years of age. Then a friend of the family put in my hands documents sealed and left by my father, for my perusal. In them was the dreadful story. In them was a request sacred and urgent, that I live only to avenge him. This I gave my oath over my father's tomb to do. But Nathaniel Crawford was dead. My father's request was to kill all of that blood, wherever I should meet them. This is my vow and my life mission!"

For a moment silence reigned. Then Tom Crawford spoke in a stern, powerful voice:

"You are the victim of a mania and a delusion," he said. "There is no need of this cobweb reserve between us longer. We understand each other. You seek my life."

"Are you the son of Nathaniel Crawford?"

"He was my father."

The tableau was one worthy an artist. The revolver carried by Myers gleamed in his hand. But Tom Crawford's hand gripped the wrist of the dark youth and averted the weapon. He was the stronger of the two. Face to face, deadly enemies they stood. Crawford was cool, while Myers trembled with fury and hate and baffled purpose.

"You cannot kill me now and here," said Tom rigidly. "Neither do I want your miserable life.

But let me warn you. The story you tell me of my father's duplicity is a base lie. That was proved at the trial. Your father was rash and headstrong in committing the murder. For that he suffered. You have no wrong to avenge. If my father was guilty I would be in nowise responsible. It would be no revenge to take my life!"

But Myers's face glowed with savage expression of hatred.

"It is the cursed blood," he replied. "No Myers was ever known to violate the oath of a family revenge. The vendetta must be wrought."

"Then I warn you that I will kill you if you dare to attack me!" cried Tom sternly. "Never dare attempt it!"

He wrenched the pistol from the villain's grip and flung it out the open port. Then he relaxed his grip on Myers and pointed to the stateroom door.

"I warn you not to attempt your nefarious project on board this ship!" said Tom coolly. "Get out of my stateroom, you dog. If you come into the same part of the ship again where I am during this voyage, I will appeal to the captain to put you in irons!"

Myers stepped out of the stateroom. There was a hideous contortion of his feature as he hissed:

"The time will come. I shall win."

Then he glided away. Tom closed the door and drew a deep breath. He looked in the glass and saw that his face was white with horror. There was no fear upon his soul. But yet it was not a pleasant thing to think of, that a bloodthirsty assassin was upon his track. He made his toilet and then went up on deck. He saw nothing of Myers. By the rail a number of the passengers were congregated. He saw at once that there was excitement of some kind pervading passengers and crew. It did not take him long to discover what this was. Far distant upon the horizon line was a heavy yellow cloud. It seemed gradually creeping up toward the zenith. Tom had read of the dreaded typhoon of those seas, but he had never witnessed the storm. The crew were busy making the ship ready for the blow. Tom saw the ominous expression upon the sailors' faces and heard one of them say:

"We ought to pitch that chap overboard. This is for killing Mother Carey's chicken. We're bound for Davy Jones this time."

The officers were swearing at the sullen sailors. The passengers all looked fearful and worried. As Tom joined the group a slight form glided up to his side. It was Myrtle True, and, as she looked up into his face, she asked in a sweet voice:

"Do you really think the ship will stand the storm?"

"Why certainly!" said Tom, in his hearty, reassuring manner. "She is stanch and true. I see no reason."

"I hope and pray so!" said the young girl, "but that man over yonder keeps wailing and declaring that the ship will be lost."

Tom saw a thin, wiry, white-haired man sitting upon a cask by the mizzen mast. He was an eccentric-looking chap, and it was easy to trace the lines of the half imbecile in his rough face. He had during the voyage been more than once the butt of the crew's jibes, and the amusement of the passengers. His name as recorded upon the

steamer's list was Andrus Martine. Where he hailed from no one knew. A few had tried to befriend him. But his manner was repellant, and this was soon abandoned. Tom smiled at Myrtle's fears.

"I don't think you need worry," he said reassuringly. "At least, if you go down, I shall, and—and I am half tempted to believe that not such a cruel fate, after all."

The young birl blushed a vivid red. She averted her gaze modestly. Her voice trembled a trifle as she replied:

"Now, I would not wish any such misfortune."

"Indeed!" said Tom eagerly. "Pardon my bluntness, but it would be a divine pleasure for me to die with or for you."

He pressed her hand softly as he said this. She did not dare reply, but that subtle tie which unites lovers' souls was that moment created between them. At this moment Albion True appeared on the scene. Tom welcomed him cheerily, and explained the character of the oncoming storm well. Then a long, distant white line was seen racing across the sea.

"All hands below!" went up the mate's cry.

The passengers were driven into the cabin like sheep. Tom pressed Myrtle's hand and said words of farewell.

"But," she asked anxiously, "are you not coming below also?"

"My services will be needed on deck," he said bravely. "I am something of a sailor, and you know some of the men will likely go overboard, and there will be no need of extra men."

She gave a little shuddering cry.

"But you!" she gasped, "supposing you were one of those?"

"Would you care so much?" he asked, in a soft, passionate tone.

"My life would be naught then," she replied, looking up to him in a yearning way.

There was a great lump in Tom's throat. Then he tore himself away, and a moment later was before Mate King.

"I am a good sailor," he said. "Make use of me."

The passengers were hardly got below and the hatches battened when the storm struck the ship. What followed was ever after like an awful vivid dream. The steamer seemed picked up by giant hands and hurled into space. Great bodies of water beat upon her decks, and the howling winds were like a myriad demons, all in chorus. For a time the blackness of the night reigned. Tom Crawford worked side by side with the hardy sailors. It was a trying time and all were obliged to lash themselves to prevent being carried overboard. Generally a tropical storm of such violence is soon over. But while the great force of the typhoon was spent in a very short time a hard westerly gale continued to drive the ship onward. All that day and night the storm thundered on, and the seas were so heavy that it was not deemed safe to open the hatches or go below.

In the forecabin a few men would huddle at a time and partake of refreshments. No attention could be paid to the vessel's course. All that could be done was to keep her head on before the gale. How far she was driven in the next twenty-four hours it would be hard to say. But after

a long period the seas began to subside. The wind shifted and the ship rode easier. The storm was over. The spirits of the crew arose. All had given the ship up owing to their superstitious fear of the consequences of killing the albatross. This seemed disproved.

The hatches were opened and the anxious and terrified passengers released. The vessel's sails were again spread and her deck was made ship-shape. She had suffered no apparent harm, though her rigging was a bit entangled. This kept the crew busy for some time. So that it was some while later that the captain made a most astounding discovery. In some manner the needle of the ship's compass seemed deranged. It would not dip to the north as usual. Another compass was brought. But this proved the same. Some strange and appalling influence in the vicinity had the strange effect of paralyzing the magnetic needle. Without the compass to guide them they were powerless and practically driving about at random in lost latitudes.

CHAPTER III.—Driven Ashore.

It was a most horrifying discovery to the officers of the *Sybil*. As soon as it leaked out among the crew, intense excitement was created. Loud, sullen murmurs came from the forecabin.

"I tell ye it's a doomed ship!" cried one of the sailors, a mutinous fellow. "It was never known to fail."

And this was the universal sentiment. To attempt to reason with the credulous seamen was out of the question.

"It will be all right, boys," declared Captain Burton. "We are over some magnetic pole, which destroys the action of the needle. We will go north by the stars, and in time we will find that the needle will act all right again."

But the superstitious sailors would not believe this. One man above all others did much to create dissatisfaction. This was Andrus Martine, the imbecile, who declared that he had a vision, in which the vessel went down with all on board. All that day Captain Burton tried to get his bearings. But he could not tell where the vessel was to save his life.

"We are in a part of the world I never heard of before," he declared. "These latitudes are unknown to me. We are lost!"

To add to the horror of the situation, at this moment there came a sullen, mutinous roar from the forecabin. Then followed sailors' cheers, and a large number of the crew, armed with marline-spikes, bludgeons and billets, were seen coming over the deck toward the bridge. Here Captain Burton and Mate King stood. As the motley crew of bronzed seamen approached, the two officers regarded them sternly:

"What does this mean, you mutinous dogs?" shouted the captain angrily. "Get back to your quarters!"

"Any man refusing to obey shall be flogged!" declared King.

But one of the tars named Bob Cringle stepped forward and pulled his foretop, at the same time saying:

"If it pleases, sir, we want to speak to the skipper of this ship. We are steady on our beam and no grog, and we only ask for a fair marking, sir."

"But this looks like mutiny," said the captain. "What are you doing out here, anyway?"

"We want to speak your craft!"

"Well, what say ye?"

"If ye please, skipper, we don't like the course we're bearin' now. We want to make port safe an' sound!"

"Well, am I not trying to do that?" cried Captain Burton angrily.

"Aye, sir, but there's one thing agin us!"

"What is that?"

"There's a sculpin' aboard this ship that weighs her down. He is better food for the sharks, an' I make free to say, sir, the ship will mind her compass when he's over."

Tom Crawford heard this, and understood the meaning.

"Who is that obnoxious person?" asked Captain Burton.

"The landlubber that shot the albatross, sir!" replied Cringle. "It was a devil's trick at best. Over with him say we!"

A loud cheer went up from the sailors.

"Over wi' him!"

"We'll make port, then!"

Burton and King, the ship's officers, knew well enough that Harland Myers was meant. Neither liked the villain, but of course they could not accede to the request of the crew to throw him overboard.

"No," replied Captain Burton, "that can't be done, men. He is a passenger, and it would be murder. I'll say this: Go back to your quarters. In twenty-four hours I will have the ship in known latitudes, or you may throw me overboard."

"We ain't got a chalkmark agin ye, cap'n," declared Cringle.

"All right; then you'll stick by me. Give me twenty-four hours. Now back to your quarters."

The crew fell back. They consulted briefly, and then, with a cheer, retired. The mutiny was over. The ship kept on her random course. The hours passed and nightfall came. Captain Burton paced the bridge anxiously. But the night passed and another day. Still the ship kept to the northward. It seemed as if she must soon get into known latitudes. But high head winds prevailed. The sky was full of black, angry clouds. The air had grown chill, and save for the seeming impossibility of the thing, the voyagers would have believed themselves in Cape Horn seas.

It was with difficulty that the crew were kept under control. Days passed almost into a week. The ship made progress slowly against the powerful gales. Then calamities began to come thick and fast. The avenger, Harland Myers, had been seen little upon the deck. He seemed to shun the society of all. His conduct, however, attracted little attention from any but Tom Crawford. The latter knew well enough that the villain was waiting his time. He kept well on his guard. The imbecile, Andrus Martine, had been acting very strangely of late. He seemed possessed with a desire to get hold of the helm of the ship. Of course the helmsman would not grant any such

request. This angered Martine, and he crept sullenly away.

But he bided his chance. One night, when all had retired and the only occupants of the deck were the port and starboard watches and the helmsman, the maniac glided out of the cabin, and chuckling with glee over some project, stole aft. He managed to get around in the rear of the man at the wheel by means of some deep shadows and the latter's carelessness. Then gripping a heavy marline spike in his hand, he sprung forward like a panther. Down came the weapon with crushing force upon the helmsman's head. He sank down without a groan. With a fiendish scream the maniac seized the spokes of the wheel. The wind had been gaining force and was now a gale. The steamer was making rapid progress and Martine changed her head so that she ran before the gale. On she went like a streak through the gloom. For full an hour Martine handled the wheel. The vessel had been running at random and now suddenly a warning cry went up from the starboard watch.

"Ahoy! port your helm or you'll run ashore. Lively there!"

Martine clung to the wheel and saw dead ahead in the dim light the outlines of a coast, whether of an island or continent he could not tell. Again the yell came from the watch.

"Ahoy, there! Port your helm quick. We'll be ashore."

But Martine only laughed in a devilish way. Captain Burton, hearing the call, came rushing out of his cabin.

"A coast!" he cried excitedly, addressing the watch. "Where is it?"

The sailor pointed dead ahead. An oath and a cry of consternation escaped the captain's lips.

"For the love of God port your helm, you lubber!" he yelled.

But the helmsman did not reply, and the irate captain started for the wheel. But before he reached it, by the binnacle he saw the features of old Martine.

"My God!" he gasped. "How did he get hold of that wheel?"

Then he saw the prostrate form of the pilot, and he grasped the situation. An awful cry burst from his lips.

"My God!" he cried, "nothing can save us. That is—"

But he never finished the sentence. The next moment the Syril struck the rock-bound coast. There was a fearful shock and every passenger came flying out of the cabin en dishabille. To add to all, a mighty sea swept over the ship, driven ashore by the hand of fate. Her bow was down and her stern high out of the water. The scene baffles description. The mighty steamer lay head onto the sunken reef. The scene on her deck was one of frightful confusion. The common impulse was to leave the vessel and get ashore. Some leaped overboard and endeavored to swim. Many sank and others were swept overboard by the heavy seas. Only the cool nerve of Captain Burton and Tom Crawford saved many lives. The passengers were urged to remain calm. The ship could sink no more and as soon as the waters became calmer boats would be lowered.

A search was made for the fiend who had run

the ship ashore. But he could not be found. The coast of the island was distant fully a quarter of a mile. The Syril lay head under the water upon a sunken reef. Gradually the seas went down. In the darkest hours of the morning the disembarkation began. The lights of the ship lit up the vicinity and showers of sparks rushed from her funnels. High up on her decks the passengers were huddled. First the mate's dingey was lowered and Tom Crawford, King and two seamen started for the shore. As they rowed away from the wreck the scene presented was a terrible one. The water was full of wreckage and to this and an overturned boat clung those unfortunates who had been so unwise as to throw themselves overboard. Relief could not be given them just then and the dingey pulled straight for the island shore.

CHAPTER IV.—The Island Colonies.

It was Mate King's purpose to first find a safe landing place upon the island shore. Then the dingey could go back and pick up those in the water, and signals could be given to lower other boats, which, however, was already being done. King held the tiller and Tom sat at his feet, while the seamen pulled the oars. The boat glided rapidly for the shore. Soon they were in the breakers. The dingey, with a lurch and swing, was carried high up onto the beach, and dragged out of the way of the returning wave by the two sailors. The picture presented by the stranded steamer from the shore was a thrilling one.

Her stern was high up out of the water, so that the screw and rudder were exposed. After striking the reef she backed off, her forward compartments quickly filled with water, putting her bow underneath. And thus she was safely anchored. But she was certainly bound to be broken up in time by the action of the sea. However, it was easy to see that those who had wisely remained on board were all safe and would be got off without trouble as soon as daylight should come. A brief survey of the shore was made. Of course in the night little estimate could be formed of the character of the island. But it afforded a safe landing-place, and this was all that was necessary just now. Having ascertained this, King said:

"Now let us try and pick up some of those poor devils in the water!"

A few were safely drifting ashore through the breakers, and a number were huddled together on the beach a short distance below. The boat was run into the surf and was soon out into the sea once more. The work of picking up those nearest at hand was begun. Full half a score were thus safely landed. Those on board the Syril had recovered from their fears and were waiting for daylight to disembark. Tom and King now returned to the steamer's deck. The young New Yorker's first thought was of Myrtle True. He found her in company with her father by the lee rail watching the shore fearfully. As Tom came forward and spoke reassuring words, she cried:

"Oh, how dreadfully unwise it was for those poor people to fling themselves overboard. I fear many of them were drowned!"

"Yes," replied Tom, "quite a number were, I believe. It was very sad!"

"And was this the fiendish work of that crazy old man called Andrus Martine!"

"It was," replied Tom.

"Now awful! We are doomed to spend the rest of our days on a desert isle!"

"Let us hope not!" said Tom cheerily. "Some passing ship will take us off, I am sure!"

But the young girl shook her head.

"Ships do not come into these unknown latitudes," she said, "unless blown here by adverse winds, as we were."

At that moment Tom experienced a strange chill, as if some deadly foe was near. He turned slightly and saw a dark form not ten feet distant in the shadows. Burning eyeballs glared at him in the semi-light, and he instinctively recognized Harland Myers. The villain had not shown himself for a number of days, but now Tom heard a sibilant, devilish whisper come floating down to his ears upon the night wind:

"This isle will be too small for you and I. One or the other must remain upon it. When we meet alone for the first time, the vendetta shall be paid!"

Then he glided away in the darkness. Tom, who did not reply, turned pale, though not from fear. He looked swiftly at Myrtle, but was satisfied that she had not heard the warning. There was now a great outcry on board to find and punish Martine. But the wily old maniac could not be found. Some declared that he had leaped into the sea. However this was, his hiding-place was secure. The night hours passed slowly by. But dawn came at last. Then the weary, waiting passengers saw the smiling shores of a rarely beautiful tropical isle. There were waving palms, bushy recesses, high picturesque cliffs, chattering monkeys and singing birds, and for a time the spirits of all revived. Men, women and children became suddenly brighter and eager to reach the shore. The dingey, cutter and long boat were quickly put into requisition.

The second cutter and other boats of the ship were stove or adrift in the sea. But the disembarkation proceeded rapidly. Two hundred and twenty human souls answered to the count on shore. The missing were ten in number, probably drowned, and among these was the maniac, Andrus Martine. The next move in order was to provide sustenance for this vast company. The stores on board the ship were mostly intact and could probably be recovered, but they would last only a few months at the most. And then, unless other provisions were made for food, starvation would be the order. First Mate King and Tom Crawford seemed to be the leading spirits. Both spoke confident, encouraging words.

"Pshaw!" cried Tom heartily. "We cannot starve. The sea and shore will furnish fish, oysters, clams, and in the interior we must find fruits. There is a consignment of garden seeds aboard the ship, and we can clear land and plant gardens."

This proposition was in general joyfully accepted. But there were a dozen or more roving spirits who refused to adopt such a plan. These believed that they could penetrate into the interior and make a better living by hunting game. They

were the rougher part of the crew, and first to join them was Harland Myers. With ammunition in plenty they struck into the tangled forests of the isle and were quickly lost to view. A startling incident occurred the third day after the wreck.

It had been a commonly accepted fact that Martine, the maniac, who had driven the Syril ashore, was dead. Thus far not a trace of him had been seen. But upon the third morning of their stay upon the island, Jack King had occasion to row out to the wreck. The sea was smooth, and Jack took his wife and baby Ethel with him, as well as a young sailor named Robert Fair. The mate and Fair each pulled an oar, and when the wreck was reached, Jack climbed a rope and went up over the rail. The dingey lay gently rocking under the stern of the beached steamer. Close by her hull was the upturned and stove second cutter.

The moment Jack went over the rail he saw a crouching form by the broken stump of the mainmast. The mate did not have to look twice to recognize with amazement the maniac, Martine. The old man crouched there, shivering and prattling. But at sight of Jack he gave an eerie yell and darted for the cabin. Jack pursued him, but he was too quick and got out of the way. Search as he would, the mate could find no trace of him. Much excited, he was determined to return to the shore, get a crew and capture the madman. This was imperative, for it was hard telling what fearful mischief he might do. So he returned to the dingey. But he had barely taken his seat and grasped his oar when out from behind the rudder swam the maniac. He made a dive for the gunwale of the boat and seized the life line with one hand and the rail with the other. With his contorted face upturned he screamed:

"Don't let an old man drown. Save me, mates! Take me aboard!"

Robert Fair, with half terror, raised his oar to beat the wretch off. But Mrs. King, who sat in the stern, put out her hand and cried:

"For God's sake do not strike him. It would be murder!"

"But he is a murderer!" cried the young sailor. "He drove the ship ashore!"

"Yet he is a human being!" pleaded Mrs. King. "Spare his life. He knows not what he is doing."

For a moment the two men were perplexed. Then Mate King solved the problem.

"Ye can't come aboard, Martine. But hang to the line and we'll pull ye ashore. Then ye must deliver yourself up!"

The maniac showed by no expression of his haggard features that he heard or understood. He continued to cling to the life line until the boat made the breakers. Then the moment his feet struck the sands he bounded away for the cliffs like a gazelle. Neither King nor Robert were able to overtake him. He made good his escape into the tangled forest. The news that Martine was alive and at large upon the island created a sensation among the castaways. Women and children were terrified and did not dare to venture far abroad. Men went about armed. But there was no time at present to hunt down the maniac. There was much work to do and the castaways fell to it with a will.

A meeting was held and the body of human souls formed themselves into a community with established rulers and hastily formed laws. King was made governor of the little island colony, and Tom Crawford was his deputy. Then active work was begun. There were no laggards. It was a question of life or death with each man, and all worked manfully. First, a fine spot was selected upon the bluff for the island town. A good view seaward was to be had. Here the streets were laid out in lines, each man given a building plot, and the building of rude cabins begun. Some of the timbers of the ship were utilized for sills, frame and floors of the cabins. Then the roofs were thatched, and the walls were erected of rudely plastered stone. Really quite a habitable dwelling was thus constructed.

The adornment of the interior was left to the women. And right royally they executed it. Many rich hangings, carpets and furniture were brought from the wreck. Cooking utensils and other articles of necessity were procured in the same manner. Several weeks passed in this manner. The result was most gratifying. A cheerful little town sprung into existence upon the cliff. Some ways back in the interior good arable land was found. This was cut up into garden plots and each man had soil upon which to plant corn, beans, sweet potatoes and any product indigenous to a tropical clime. The first despair and desolation of their misfortune had worn away, and the island colonists were really beginning to enjoy the novelty of island life. There was plenty of diversion each day. The little community was social and began to feel happy. Until now no thought had been given to exploration of the island.

More advantageous localities for the building of the town might have existed but they knew it not. There were some inclined to dispute the wisdom of having built without first having explored. But the plan had been that of Jack King and Tom Crawford. They defended their action upon quite reasonable grounds, that exploration might have resulted in worse disaffection and lack of a settled purpose. But differences will arise in the most well ordered communities.

CHAPTER V.—A Trip of Exploration.

Every day the sea was breaking up the wreck of the steamer. Portions of the bulwarks or the cabins would drift ashore. And Tom Crawford established what he was pleased to call a "shipward" in the little cove. Every timber was carefully rescued and utilized. The beach soon began to assume the proportions of a huge lumber yard. Nails, spikes, screws and king-bolts, nuts and dead-eyes were all extracted and saved. Nothing was allowed to go to waste. Ship carpenters' tools had been saved from the wreck. Tom had the assistance of one of the crew who understood the building of a ship quite well.

"I am not going to try to build a new ship," said Tom, in explanation, "for that would be impossible. But I can build several small boats, and perhaps a small sloop, with which we can explore the coast, anyway."

But as long as the project did not promise to the others the certainty of escape from the island, they took little interest in it. So that Tom was almost alone in his projects. However, this did not discourage him in the least. Tom had built a little cabin for the Trues upon the cliff and made his home with them. Myrtle proved herself now a woman of resource, despite the fact that she had been reared in affluence. The weeks passed, and Tom kept busily at work upon his boats. He built two small boats, and then began work upon a small sloop. The other colonists were occupied with their projects of farming.

It began to look as if the colonists must spend the remainder of their lives upon the isle. To some this presented a rosy picture; but others disconsolately mourned dear ones at home. Such kept constant watch for a sail. But it came not. The same boundless, unbroken horizon presented itself each day. No welcome sail hove in view. There was something pitiful in the earnest hope of these disappointed ones. Alas, their prayers were to remain unanswered. Gradually matters fell into the daily swing and routine of a settled thing. Quiet and regularly became the order. Tom Crawford, however, could not content himself with such a state of affairs. He resolved to explore the island coast. Since the half score or more of rough spirits had struck into the interior nothing had been seen or heard of them. Martine, it was suspected, still hovered about the town, and there were plenty to affirm having seen him. This fact kept alive a species of terrorism, and guards patrolled the streets at night for fear that the wretch might fire the town.

Tom had heard nothing of Harland Myers since that first night of the wreck and landing. If the villain intended consummating his oath of vendetta, he did not appear to do it. But Tom lost no sleep on that account. With his mind made up to execute his plan for a tour of exploration along the coast, Tom fitted out the largest of the two boats he had built. This carried a single leg o' mutton sail, and ought to sail quite fast. Provisions were put aboard and preparations made for the trip. Tom had selected for his companions Jack King and two trusty seamen of good grit, Jack Cringle and Billy Bosun. The party of four was well armed, for they knew not what they might run against. Thus equipped early one morning the start was made.

The little shallop, if the craft could be called such, stood merrily out around the point and off to sea. When well out of the doldrums which haunted the proximity of the shore, Tom held the shallop down for a quick run along the coast. Very soon they rounded the cape and left the little settlement out of sight. And now for a long ways Tom saw that the coast was very straight and unbroken. For miles the shallop kept on, and still there was no change. Finally the coast began to bend, and they knew that they had reached the end of the island.

"I tell ye, mates!" cried Jack Cringle, "this is a powerful big island. I dunno nuthin' 'bout these lattyitudes, but I'm a sculpin if it warn't some time a part of a continent!"

"I don't doubt it at all, Jack!" cried Tom, "and

I also believe that this is only one of an archipelago."

"Do ye reckon thar's any human beings on these islands?" asked Jack King.

"You—you mean cannibals?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know how to answer that!" replied Tom slowly; "thus far we have seen no evidence of such!"

Billy Bosun shook his head.

"But ye can't tell, mates," he affirmed, "there may be yer jest ther same!"

"Thet reckoning may be dead right!" said Jack King, "but we won't worry over it until they do come!"

"We have more to fear from old Martine than any one else!" said Tom. "But for his insanity we would not now be here!"

"The wretch!" gritted King fiercely.

The shallop now stood in nearer the shore. The wind off this point of the island was very strong and the boat ran like a ghost. It required an hour or more to weather the end of the island. Then coming to the mouth of what looked like a river it was decided to land. Into the river mouth or bay the shallop ran. Good anchorage was found and then all entered the dingey to row ashore. But before they were halfway there Billy Bosun put up a hand and shouted:

"By gunwales! What do ye call that?"

Everybody gazed in the direction indicated. All were surprised. Upon a high cliff prominent to the gaze of one far out to sea was a startling object. It was a tall structure of stone, and made exactly in the shape of a cross. Open-mouthed and wonderstruck the boat's crew gazed at it for some moments. Then Jack Cringle blurted out:

"Blow me high! I'm a blasted landlubber if some one don't live on this island yet, or mebber they have been here!"

"'Tain't likely that cross was made by nater!" affirmed King positively.

"Not a bit of it!" said Tom Crawford; "that is the work of human hands, and we will very soon find out whose."

Nothing more was said until the dingey struck the sands of the shore. Then all leaped out. Straight for the cliff they made. To their surprise nicely chiseled steps were cut in its hard surface. This was certainly evidence of human habitation. However, up the steps all went at a rapid pace. Up, until suddenly Tom Crawford, who was in the lead, paused. In the cliff wall was cut, in irregular letters, the following:

ANNO DOMINI, 1705.

"Six shipwrecked mariners we are,
From England's shores we've come afar;
Fate brought us to this wretched isle,
The devil keeps us here the while.
Spared should we be the fires of hell,
For suffering here so long a spell;
We daily pray, God give us grace,
And take us from this cursed place."

The explorers read this crude rhyme with curious sensations. It explained the whole matter in a nutshell. Six survivors of a shipwreck, fully a century and three-quarters previous, had lived

upon the isle, and possibly their bones were yet here. That their fate had been a most unpleasant one was evident by the import of the lines. Several times the curious rhyme was read, then they pushed on to the top of the cliff. In a few moments the stone steps ended, and they were upon the level of the cliff-top. A singular scene was presented. Back from the cliff for several scores of yards, the forest had been cleared and rich green turf grew. High up on the brow of the cliff was the huge cross.

It was made of blocks of stone rudely held together by mortar. But back of the clearing was a long stone structure, now roofless. It had loopholes for windows and a door. Along the face of the cliff was the remnant of a wall, which might have been meant for a parapet. The rusted remains of an ancient brass cannon lay moldering on the wall. And there were iron rings in the rock, and a drilled aperture in which a flagpole might have set.

"Blow we high!" spouted Bill Bosun, giving his duck trousers a hitch, "this are a better lookout than ours, messmates. It's high an' dry an' a fine prospect!"

"Right, me hearty!" cried Jack Cringle, "but I'd never stay here over night among dead men's bones. Ugh!"

Every one laughed at this, but Tom Crawford had pressed on toward the roofless stone building. That it had been the habitation of the six mariners he felt sure. His curiosity was strong to know their fate, so he boldly entered the crumbling doorway. The interior of the house of stone was such as one might have imagined the home of sailors might be. It was long and cut up into three compartments. All the wood that had formed a part of the structure had long since rotted away.

But there were the remains of the furnace, where their cooking had been done. Upon the stone floor various implements of steel and copper were scattered about. But what gave a chill to Tom was the sight of a heap of skeletons at the lower end of the structure. Three skeletons there were, sadly mixed together, probably the work of prowling beasts. Tom gazed upon them sadly. Then he turned away, and in doing so spied a narrow recess in the stone wall of the house. He thrust his hand into it, and pulled out a book. It needed but a glance to recognize it as a ship's log. The dry climate had preserved the ancient volume well. The leaves were hardly musty as Tom turned them. The finding of the log was a matter of deep interest. It had an absolute and complete account of the experiences of the wrecked mariners, and how they came to be cast away as well.

No time was lost in perusing the log of the Flying Cricket, which was the name of the ship. It contained a list of the adventures of the vessel and her stranding on the island; of the fever which doomed all hands to death. After the reading of the log the sailors dug a grave and consigned the skeletons to it. They then continued their explorations. A high mountain was seen in the distance, but it was determined to return now to their shallop and set out for their habitations. The party now set out through the forest. Suddenly they came across a fresh footprint, and it

was resolved to follow it. It led to a cliff overlooking the sea and they saw their shallop, but in the dingey were five men putting out to the shallop. They rushed down to the shore. There they recognized Harland Myers as one of the crew of the dingey. Myers saw Tom Crawford and the latter uttered a hoarse laugh and pulled a revolver and fired at Tom. But the bullet missed its mark and struck Billy Bosun full in the breast. The sailor gave a gasping cry and fell dead.

With derisive yells the villains boarded the shallop and set sail and our friends set out on foot for the settlement, which they reached later in the afternoon, vowing vengeance against their enemies.

The people of the settlement were struck with horror when they heard what had happened. But things went along in their usual way and Myrtle and Tom Crawford were becoming more and more in love with each other. The fate of the shallop was never learned up till this time. But one day when Tom was at work upon a new boat Myrtle burst in upon him and rushed, half fainting into his arms.

CHAPTER VI.—The Pirate.

The villains who had stolen the shallop put to sea rapidly. The island faded from view. They sailed on not realizing that hunger stared them in the face until it was too late. Day after day went by until the hunger craze seized them, and they became like cannibals. Like ravenous wolves they fought for the lives of those who were the weakest to sustain them. One had succumbed.

In the state of actual starvation the human mind becomes prey to a depravity which is horrible to contemplate. The insatiable demon gnawing at the victim's stomach demands satisfaction. The most desperate and awful of measures are often taken. Therefore the act of cannibalism intended by the shallop's crew was not without precedent. There are many cases on record where drifting castaways at sea have murdered a companion and subsisted upon his flesh for many days. Courser and Speer had drawn sharp knives and prepared to carry out their purpose. But before it could be even begun an incident occurred to prevent. Suddenly a great, hoarse and joyful cry went up from the lips of Al Mains. It arrested the human butchers.

"A sail! A sail!" he shouted.

Like a bolt from the clouds came the announcement. A glance satisfied all of a thrilling fact. A white sail had loomed above the horizon. The craft was making a course direct toward the drifting boat. Words cannot express the joy of the shallop's party. But yet they stood dazed as if unwilling to believe it but an optical illusion. But it was no mirage, and an actual fact, as could be plainly seen. With this realization, the shallop's crew yelled with fiendish delight. But Myers was silent. His shrewd, evil eyes twinkled maliciously, and he reached forward and laid hands upon the dead body of Binney. With a quick move he threw it overboard, and it drifted away, a ghastly sight, upon the waves. Courser turned in surprise, and as if to remonstrate, but Myers said:

"It's all right; we don't want the crew of yonder vessel to see him."

"Right ye are, mate!" cried Courser. "It's sure they've got their eyes on us, and we are saved!"

"What do you make her out to be?" cried Jerry Speer.

All strained their gaze at the approaching vessel. As she drew nearer, and it was evident that they were sighted, a gun was fired, and then the ship turned toward them. She made rapid headway and soon had approached within hailing distance. She was then seen to be a rakish, swift sailing craft and carrying twenty guns. No flag floated at her yard, nor was there any way of judging her nationality.

"What do ye make her out to be, mates?" cried Courser, in a puzzled way.

"Give it up!" was the reply from the others.

"She may be a South American cruiser!"

"She's no merchant ship with all those guns. What is she?"

It was a riddle. But in their desperate situation it could not be seen that the shallop's crew had much choice. They must affiliate with the mysterious ship's company or die. Then as she drew nearer a name was seen upon her bow. It was a peculiar one.

"Demonio!"

The crew were crowding the rail. They were seen to be Lascars and Malays, as well as a spattering of every nationality almost on the globe. A hail came from the shrouds.

"Boat ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" replied Courser.

"Who are ye?"

"We are shipwrecked from the steamer Syril!" replied Courser. "We ask for help. We are nearly starving."

A mocking laugh greeted this declaration; but the same voice came back.

"Run your craft up under us and we'll throw ye a rope?"

This was done. The gangway was lowered and the castaways went up onto the deck. They stood for a moment before a tall, darkly handsome man who was dressed all in black and wore a long sword. He listened to Courser's narrative with interest. Then he said:

"Well, you are welcome to the Demonio, so long as you agree to become of us!"

"We are able seamen!" replied Courser. "We will be glad to serve you!"

The black captain laughed.

"Ha, ha!" he cried. "Do you know in whose power you are?"

"No," replied the sailor wonderingly.

"Well, I am Captain Demonio, and this is my ship. My motto is: Death to those who resist me!"

With which he threw open his coat and displayed a broad surface of waistcoat underneath upon which was heavily executed a skull and crossbones. Like a flash all came to the castaways. This was a pirate ship, and they remembered now having in a dim way heard of Captain Demonio, the pirate of the South Seas. For a moment silence reigned, then Captain Demonio made a signal and a score of men sprang savagely forward with gleaming cutlasses.

"Swear allegiance to Captain Demonio!" cried

the pirate captain. "You shall have food and drink and a good berth if you do. If not you shall have death."

With a cheer all raised their right hands. Courser cried:

"Have no fear. We ask only to be taken into your service. We swear!"

The oath was taken. Myers swore allegiance with the rest. Then all were treated to food and wine. That night they slept aboard the pirate ship. The next day they were initiated into service aboard the pirate ship. The pirate captain recognized Myers as the most intelligent of the quartette and plied him with many questions.

"This island," he asked, "tell me all about it."

Myers did so.

"You say there is a settlement on it of over two hundred people?" declared Demonio. "They must have treasure."

"Ah, that they have!" cried Myers, a sudden fiendish thought occurring to him; "but they would fight!"

"Fight!" hissed the pirate captain. "And so can I. I would like to locate them. They should pay me tribute, by Satan!"

"I wish I could give you the bearings of the island," declared Myers eagerly; "but—for some reason or other our nautical apparatus failed to work. Some trouble with the compass, I believe."

"Yes," rejoined the pirate captain. "I understand. These are lost latitudes. I have been sailing in these accursed seas for a month now and I do not even know where I am."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Myers. "Do you ever expect to get out of them?"

"Indeed, one cannot sail a whole lifetime without some time reaching waters where the needle will not dip to the north. Oh, yes, we will soon find a way out of these seas. But I regret that we cannot locate that island."

"So do I!" hissed Myers malevolently. "I would like to see every dog of them slaughtered. There is one in particular whose windpipe I would like to squeeze myself."

Captain Demonio looked at Myers with increased respect and admiration.

"Per dieu!" he exclaimed. "You are a trump, sir. Verily, I believe you would make a good pirate chief yourself!"

"If executing a murderous antipathy against honest people is all that is required I believe I would," declared Myers.

"Excellent! How would you like it? I will try you. You shall be my lieutenant."

"We will see."

So it happened that the warmest of friendship sprang up between Myers and the pirate captain. For weeks the Demonio cruised about in the lost latitudes. The weeks passed into months and the outlook was getting serious when one morning a fog, in which they had sailed for days, lifted and an astounding spectacle was revealed. To leeward was a beautiful tropical isle. Its shores could be plainly seen, and upon a high cliff certainly there was plainly visible a small settlement. In the waters of the harbor rocked a few small boats.

"The island!" gasped Myers. Then a yell of fiendish delight escaped him. "Hurrah! We have

our wish answered, Demonio! Now for vengeance!"

The villain's tones were diabolical and the pirate captain joined him. The outlook for the island colony was perilous indeed.

CHAPTER VII.—The Fight With the Pirates.

The appearance of the pirate ship off the island had created a fearful alarm. Some men upon the beach had been the first to see her. They quickly spread the report that a vessel bearing a pirate's flag was off the point. Thus it was that Myrtle, thrilled with terror, had rushed into Tom Crawford's workshop.

"Oh, Tom!" she cried, "an awful thing has happened!"

For a moment brave Tom was speechless. At the moment he believed that the death stroke had been visited upon Albion True. But a second glance at the young girl's face taught him that it was not sorrow but alarm that thrilled her.

"My love!" he exclaimed solicitously, clasping her to his breast, "what has happened?"

But Myrtle had no need to answer this question. The loud commotion from the cliff now attracted Tom's attention. He at once put Myrtle from him and sprang out of the door. A glance told him the awful truth.

"My God!" he gasped, "the worst has come to pass!"

Tom Crawford knew well what the appearance of the pirates meant. It was useless to think of temporizing or treating with them. A battle to the death was the sole alternative.

"We must not even allow them to land," he concluded.

Then he turned to Myrtle.

"Go back to your father, love, as quick as you can!" he cried earnestly, "pray for us, oh, pray for our success!"

Myrtle obeyed. Tom grasped his rifle and all the ammunition he could find. The whole settlement was now in an uproar. There seemed no leading spirit until Tom appeared upon the scene. Then the young leader cried:

"It is folly to meet them in a friendly way. They must not be allowed to land, I tell you. To arms, every one!"

Jack King was with Tom in this.

"Right!" he cried. "We must fight for our homes, our lives and liberty."

As quickly as possible a hundred armed men were gathered and started down the shore. The pirate ship had dropped anchor and a boat was lowered from her side. At the moment she was one hundred and fifty yards from the shore. Tom hailed her. He saw a tall, dark, villainous fellow standing on the quarter-deck harshly giving orders.

"Ahoy!" he shouted. "What ship is that?"

"Ahoy!" came back the hail, "this is the brig Demonio, Captain Demonio!"

"You fly a black flag. Are we to infer that you are a pirate?"

"Infer what you please!" was the jeering reply. Tom set his lips tightly.

"Then we cannot allow you to come ashore!" he cried.

For a moment the pirate captain was silent. Then he made the air blue with a volley of oaths.

"Oh, ye won't, eh?" he yelled savagely. "Well, we'll see how ye're goin' to stop us. Surrender, every dog of ye, or we'll kill ye!"

But Tom and his men aimed their rifles at the boat's crew.

"If you attempt to land upon this island, we shall fire!" he shouted.

Again savage curses from the pirate captain. Then, as the boat struck out, there was a burst of flame from the side of the pirate ship, and the next moment a shower of small shot came flying into the ranks of the defenders of the island. With fearful effect, too. Three of the islanders dropped dead and others were wounded. Tom's ire now was aroused.

"Fire!" he shouted. "Riddle every man of them; then take to the cover of the rocks."

Boom! Crash! Another discharge came from the ship's guns. Then the islanders poured a volley into the approaching boat. It had the effect of literally cleaning it out. Not one of the pirate crew but was hit, and half of them were killed. The boat drifted at the mercy of the waves. The anger of the pirate captain was something fearful to witness. Then the islanders sought the cover of rocks about. But at that moment Jack King cried:

"Look! upon my word, there is Harland Myers aboard that ship!"

This was the truth. The Demonio was the same ship which had picked up the crew of the shallop at sea. Myers stood by the rail and with Captain Demonio exhorted the pirate crew to another attempt at landing. In vain Tom and the others tried to get a shot at the villain. Some object always protected him. But now the pirates adopted new tactics. A broadside was opened upon the shore. The spot where the islanders had stood was literally riddled with small shot. But the defenders had all sought the cover of the rocks and were comparatively safe. In vain Captain Demonio tried to dislodge them. Thus far the islanders had much the best of the battle. But the pirate captain now launched his boats upon the other side of the ship and they were rowed straight across the harbor toward the opposite shore. This seemed to make a landing almost an absolute certainty, and for a moment consternation reigned among the islanders.

"By Jove, they will outgeneral us!" cried Tom. "I say, Jack, won't you take half our men and go around there to meet them. You'll have to go lively!"

"Right ye are, lad!" cried King excitedly, "but we'll try it. Come on, lads!"

Part of the force at once started to go over the cliff. But already a number of those left in the settlement had started to defend the point in question. The Demonio still kept up her bombardment of the shore, and the islanders returned the fire as best they could. The party sent around to intercept the boats were, however, unable to reach the necessary point. But the boats failed to make a landing. For some inexplicable reason, they turned back toward the ship. The tars could

be seen bending to their oars with all their might. What did it mean? Tom Crawford was astounded.

"Upon my word!" he gasped. "What has struck them?"

All of the islanders stood watching this move with amazement. What was more, the *Demonio* had ceased firing and had begun to weigh anchor. Truly here was a puzzle.

"They are going to leave!" exclaimed Tom.

"So it seems!"

"But what for?"

Sailors were seen in the rigging of the pirate vessel. Truly a greater mystery could hardly be conceived. It could not be said that Captain *Demonio* had the worst of the battle. At least this was no excuse for his leaving. The boats now rapidly made for the ship. Soon they were aboard. Then the pirate captain's voice was heard hailing the shore.

"Land ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" returned Tom.

"We will return. Think not that you have escaped the vengeance of Captain *Demonio*. When I come again you shall feel it."

"When you come again you will meet with a worse reception," retorted Tom.

The pirate captain made no reply. He allowed his ship to stand off shore. The islanders watched the departure. Then suddenly, and without warning, a great gloom shut down over land and sea. Startled, all looked about for the cause. Jack King at this moment came rushing up.

"Quick, for your lives!" he shouted. "Get to cover if you would not die!"

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" cried Tom Crawford.

King simply pointed to the sky. This was the best reply he could make.

Then Tom saw the meaning of the pirates' departure. A fierce storm was approaching. Soon the storm burst over the settlement. But in half an hour the sun was shining again. After it was over discontent settled upon some members of the settlement. Idleness seized upon a number of them. Tom saw that something should be done. If the pirates returned now nobody could tell what might happen. Their supplies were running low. Disease fell upon them. Many died from the plague. In the midst of it Jack King's baby fell ill of the disease and the man became distraught. The baby later died. While they were burying Jack's baby the figure of Martine was seen upon a cliff waving his arms. Jack drew his revolver and fired at the figure, but Martine disappeared and it was not known whether he was hit or not. Seeing there was no other way, Tom's latest boat was launched and the survivors boarded her and set sail away from the island. A few days were spent in this way sailing about no one knew where, when a terrific storm overtook them, and every mast went by the board and water rushed in upon them.

CHAPTER VIII.—Cast Adrift.

Sailing at random over the limitless sea was the pirate ship *Demonio*. After being driven off the fated isle by the hurricane, she had weathered

the storm only to become more hopelessly lost than ever in those terrible lost latitudes. Drifting before wind and wave, day after day, it was no wonder that her villainous crew waxed restless and even desperate. The position of Harland Myers aboard the *Demonio* was not of the most enviable. Had he been sole commander of the ship, he would rather have enjoyed it, but he was Captain *Demonio*'s lieutenant, and subject to his orders. And the pirate captain was a tyrant in the strongest sense of the term. He was fickle, capricious, and given to getting beastly intoxicated. At such times he indulged in a literal reign of terror aboard the ship. It was dangerous to cross him.

He would just as soon string a man up to the yardarm for a mere whim as for a real misdemeanor. The entire crew stood in terror of him. Myers very discreetly kept his temper. In this politic manner he got along with the tyrant for a while. But every day the crew began to grow more and more inclined to mutiny. The uncertainty which surrounded them, and the lack of opportunity to capture prizes, or loot other ships, created disaffection. This swelled to great proportions. Among them was a burly German, Max Leisler. He was a powerful brute, as devoid of feeling and pity as a stone. Leisler conceived the first idea of the mutiny. He began to lay his plans in a clumsy fashion. And right here was the trouble. Had he been a shrewder and more far-sighted man, he would have proceeded more cautiously, and would, no doubt, have won.

But his lack of depth and subtle force proved his ruin. The plan was to make an uprising in the forecabin at night, then overpower the watch and surprise the captain in his cabin and kill him. Leisler was then to be captain, and the crew were to have their fill of grog and run the ship to suit themselves. Luckily for Captain *Demonio* a spy brought the news to him. It sobered the pirate captain at once.

"By Neptune, I'll fix 'em!" he muttered savagely. "There'll be no more mutiny on board this ship, I'll warrant."

Six men at his command dragged giant Max Leisler out upon the deck. He was confronted by *Demonio*.

"Well, you big jackanapes, you pup of Satan!" hissed the pirate captain. "You were going to kill me, were you? You were going to get command of the ship, but you fell into your own trap!"

Leisler did not attempt to deny the charge. He regarded his accuser sullenly, and then said:

"Well, what of it?"

"I'll show you!" gritted Captain *Demonio*, as he snapped his fingers at two of the men.

"Lead him aft!" he commanded. "Swing a noose from the yardarm!"

Leisler laughed hoarsely.

"They'll never do that!" he cried boldly. "Ho, men, stand by your leader! Cut the tyrant down! I command you!"

Leisler's voice rang out full and clear. There was a slight movement among the men, but Captain *Demonio*'s glaring eyes were upon them singling out each in turn. Not one dared to defy his power. In vain Leisler exhorted them. They were ruled by *Demonio*. The conspirator was defeated. A few moments later his body swung from the

yard. Captain Demonio was still the ruler of his ship. Myers had seen all this. He had held many interviews with Mains, Courser and Speers. There had actually been plans devised by them for overcoming Demonio and gaining command of the ship themselves.

"We could soon find a way out of this cursed sea, I reckon," declared Courser, with an oath. "Or at least we could run things to suit us."

"By barnacles, I'm with ye, shipmate!" said Speers forcibly. "Let's make the hitch."

"Put my name on thet 'davy," said Al Mains.

In some way information of this reached the ears of Demonio. The fate of the three villains was settled. Without a moment's warning he caused them to be seized and manacled. Then he ordered the plank run out. Speers and Mains were obliged to walk it. But a worse fate was reserved for Myers. The pirate captain faced him.

"Well, you treacherous sculpin!" gritted Demonio. "You thought you were gooin' to do me, eh? Well, you failed. Now yer time has come!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Myers, with the sangfroid of an arch villain trying to baffle a greater.

"I'm gooin' to put ye in a way to die a hard death!" chuckled the fiend. "Stand by there, lads, and lower the long boat!"

Overcome with horror, Myers learned the purpose of the monster. This was to set him adrift without food or drink upon the lost ocean. Death by slow starvation was what it meant. Horrible indeed was the thought. Myers was faint and sick.

"My God! You won't really do that?" he said in agony. "Be merciful! Kill me outright, or let me live!"

"Captain Demonio can show a favor to a friend, but only death to a foe!" gritted the freebooter. "This is torture added."

In vain Myers pleaded, argued and begged frantically for mercy. The pirate captain was obdurate. He would not be appeased.

"Cut away and let him drift!" he roared. "Death to my enemy!"

The command was obeyed. The ropes were cut and the long boat with its single occupant drifted away from the ship. Not a morsel of food, not a weapon, not a drop of water, nothing but the oars were in the boat. This in midocean, and perhaps hundreds of miles from land. A worse situation could hardly be imagined. Myers was weak and faint with horror and despair. At best he was an arrant coward, and this was enough to tax even stronger nerves than his. What was the use of using the oars? He could not hope to cover any appreciable distance on that boundless sea. The ship drifted away rapidly and from sight. He was alone on the measureless sea, a mere atom in all that awful space. It was a horrible thought.

In vain he tried to compose his nerves. A sort of mania seized him. He crouched in the bottom of the boat chattering and crooning like a born idiot. And thus the boat drifted on. After a time drowsiness overtook the villain and he slept. When he awoke he rubbed his eyes at a strange sight near at hand. For a moment the past

twenty-four hours seemed like a dream. He was in plain view of a beautiful tropical isle. At least, its distant appearance was that of beauty. But as the low-lying mist cleared, and he saw its shores, its aspect was not so inviting.

"Jupiter!" he exclaimed, "it is the accursed isle. What a stroke of fate!"

Myers at that moment believed that he had come again to the island where the Syril had been driven ashore. But he learned his error a few moments later. The boat drifted on until it touched the sands. Then he leaped out and looked about him. As he did so he grew very pallid and his voice quivered as he rejoined:

"No, this is not the same isle! Merciful powers, in what part of the world am I? Lost, beyond all doubt!"

A terrible groan of despair escaped him, and he sank shivering down upon a rock imbedded in the sand.

CHAPTER IX.—On the Skeleton Isle.

Not one on board the sloop but believed at that moment that their fate was sealed, and that they were going to the bottom. Tons of water rushed over the deck. The craft was high upon a reef, driven there with all the force of the gale. An unknown shore was dead ahead. Fortunately all were securely lashed, or not one would have been left on board. The sloop, of course was not as strongly built as some vessels. The force of the sea made her timbers creak. It seemed every moment as if she must surely go to pieces. Mrs. King and Myrtle were lashed amidships by the cabin stairs. Tom Crawford, Jack King and Albion True were beside them. Jack Cringle and Billy Bowlin were at the wheel.

The horror of that moment was never forgotten by all on board. Nothing could compare with it. White and shivering all waited for the end. Every moment it was expected that the next wave would tear the ship to pieces. But fate had not ordained so terrible an end for them. Fortune was not wholly to desert them, and our friends speedily were rewarded with brighter hopes. No other wave came so huge and high as the one which had placed them so far upon the reef. The vessel's deck was quite clear and the ship still hung together. What must have been an hour passed. The darkness was appalling. The castaways were apprised of their position by lightning flashes, which showed a storm-swept shore and mighty cliffs. At first the horrifying thought struck each and all that they were driven back to the accursed plague-smitten isle which they had left. However, the brief glimpses of the shore decided Tom Crawford that this was not the truth. The storm continued to roar and bellow during the most of the night. Crouching there in the companionway, with the cabin half full of water, the shipwrecked people were able at times to converse. There was some comfort in this, and all expressed a new hope when the wind began to die out and the sea to grow more calm.

"We are saved!" said Myrtle, in a thrilling voice. "A merciful power has stood by us!"

"But is our fate any better?" rejoined her father. "We are simply cast upon another island."

"Let us hope that it may be at least in known latitudes," said Tom earnestly. "We will not borrow trouble until it comes."

"Right, my boy!" cried Albion True. "But—My God, what was that?"

A terrible, eerie and weird shriek rang out above the roar of the storm. It quivered and echoed and reverberated through the ship. A human voice it was raised in fierce and awful denunciation.

"Ruin and death go hand in hand! Curses upon man! It is written that the end is come!"

Then a flash of vivid lightning showed to all as plain as day the form of a man at the after rail. One moment he wavered there. Then another flash showed him falling into the sea. For a moment so overcome with horror was every one that they could not speak. Tom was the first one to say:

"Mercy on us! That was Martine!"

It was, indeed, the maniac. The astonishment of all was beyond expression. How had the wretch got aboard the sloop? All had believed him left behind upon the plague-smitten isle. It was quite certain, however, that Martine had crept into the hold of the sloop and concealed himself. But his fate now seemed surely sealed, for he had gone overboard into that seething sea, from which it did not seem possible that he could emerge alive.

"He has gone to his final accounts!" cried Jack King.

"I don't know about that," said Albion True. "He seems to have the lives of a cat!"

Gradually the darkness wore away and dawn came. So high had the sea run that now upon its subsiding the prow of the sloop was high on shore. It was an easy matter for the party to climb out on the sands. This they did, taking with them such effects as they needed. And Tom, noting the position of the sloop, remarked that it would be possible to jack her up and possibly float her off the reef. The spirits of all rose higher. The morning was bright and the air salubrious. But the isle looked drear and desolate enough. However, it was likely to be their home for a definite period to come. So it was necessary to at once prepare for a period of sojourn there. A spot was selected under the cliff for a camp. All were hungry and tired.

Couches were prepared for the ladies and they slept. But the men were consumed with the one idea to take a look at the isle upon which fate had cast them. A hearty meal was prepared from provisions aboard the sloop. Then the party set out to climb the cliff. It was found to be one of the highest points of land on the isle. Upon reaching the summit a good view of the whole island could be had. And a strange and appalling spectacle was presented to the castaways. The isle was several miles in length, and almost utterly devoid of vegetation. Its surface was of hard basaltic rock, white and bleaching in the sun. But the outlines of the isle were its strange and gruesome features. Its shape was exactly that of a mighty skeleton. Every bone, every joint was distinctly outlined. It looked for all the world like the mighty skeleton of some prehistoric giant, whose remains lay floating upon the bosom of the sea.

"A Skeleton Island!" gasped Tom Crawford in amazement. "I never saw the like of this before."

"A most peculiar freak of nature!" exclaimed Albion True.

But Jack Cringle and Billy Bowlin began to wail in a despairing way.

"No luck is with us, messmates!" cried Cringle. "It's the Isle of Death, and we'll never leave it alive. Make yer peace with Old Davy, for ye'll never see home an' friends again."

All turned and made their way back down to the beach. The same appalling gloom had settled down over the soul of each. It seemed, indeed, as if they were in the very presence of death. Words could not fitly express the situation, or the awful foreboding of fate which each felt as they stood at that moment upon the shores of the Skeleton Island.

There was a tendency now to yield to superstition among most of the survivors. Only the cool nerve of Tom Crawford kept all from utter despondency. The sloop, despite all hopes, was soon a wreck. But through Tom's endeavors, nearly all the timber was saved and he set about to construct a smaller vessel. Then an exploration of the island was begun. Tom led in this work. But their exploration only ended in despair, for the island appeared to be barren. While this was going on a cry went up from Jack Cringle. "Hi, messmates," he shouted. "I've made a find. Look, here is a boat."

CHAPTER X.—The Boat—Martine Appears Again.

Words can hardly describe the sensations of the castaways as these words rang from Cringle's lips:

"A boat!"

They pressed forward eagerly. Every eye was upon the sea.

"Where?" was the unanimous cry.

Then their senses received a rude shock. For a moment all had been obtuse and fanciful enough to think that they were to behold a ship in the offing. Therefore they were gazing seaward. But Jack cried:

"Not there! Look here!"

He pointed to where the sands and waters met. There, not fifty yards distant, partly drawn up on the shore, was a storm-shattered ship's boat. All gazed upon it dumfounded. They were not only surprised but disappointed.

"Thunder!" gasped Jack King. "I thought for a moment it was a ship come to take us away."

"So did I," agreed Tom.

"But mebbe there's one about here," declared Jack Cringle. "Or how did this likely craft get here?"

He rushed down and pulled the boat higher upon the sands. Then he released his hold upon the gunwale and bent down over some object in the sand. This was a footprint.

"Heigho!" he shouted. "Somebody has made a land here just now. Here's his tracks!"

Tom Crawford was by his side now.

"Sure enough!" he cried. "Some castaway like ourselves. This is very strange!"

"Where can the fellow be?" said Mr. True. "He can't be far away."

"We will find out," said Tom.

With which he made a trumpet of his hands and shouted:

"Hillo-o-o-o!"

Again and again he made the cliffs ring with the hail. But time passed and no answer came back. It soon became evident that the castaway was not in hearing. Tom at once returned to the surf line.

"Perhaps something about the boat may give us a clue," he said. "Let us examine it more closely."

So they pulled the boat higher upon the sands. As they did so, Jack Cringle picked up one of the oars and held it out. As this was done, all in the same moment saw an inscription upon the blade, burned in with a hot iron. Thus it read:

"Demonio."

For an instant a terrible silence fell upon all. They were aghast with the force of the conviction.

"This boat belonged to the pirate ship!" gasped Tom.

"To the Demonio!"

Then one common and thrilling thought recurred to all. How did her first boat happen to be here at this moment, battered and useless, upon the island beach. The ship herself was not in sight. This was most certain. A greater mystery never confronted the castaways. Suddenly an idea began to creep through Tom's befogged brain.

"I think I can see it," he said. "The Delmonio has foundered, and this boat, with only one survivor, has drifted ashore."

At once the others caught the idea.

"No doubt that is it!" cried King, with something like joy in his voice. "Well, we have no more to fear from that wretch and his dastardly crew!"

"Do you think it can be the pirate leader himself?" asked Mr. True.

"It may and it may not. However, we have nothing to fear, as we are a dozen to one."

"Right," cried Tom, "but just the same I am curious to find the fellow."

"So am I," declared King.

"Suppose we trail him!"

"All right. Let's do it!"

Accordingly they proceeded to follow the trail. But when the cliff was reached the footprints were lost in the flinty shale. No effort could result in finding them, so it was finally abandoned. All returned once more to the beach. The boat was searched thoroughly for some clue as to the identity of the castaways. But none could be found. After some futile conversation Tom Crawford said:

"Well, friends, let us lose no more time here. We have nothing to gain by so doing. Let us go on our way. Sooner or later we shall meet the fellow. He can't get off the isle nor we can't."

"Right!" cried Mr. True. "That is a sensible proposition. Let us get out of here at once."

So at once they set out down the beach. Three miles further brought them to the armpit of the skeleton island. As the peninsula which made the arm was narrow, they simply crossed it and continued on their way over the shoulder of the skeleton isle. Thus far, since leaving the

stranded ship's boat, no incident worthy of note had occurred. But now, just as they were rounding a small headland, every one was brought to a halt by a familiar cry. All halted and gazed at an object far up on the cliff above them. It was the form of a madman, and no other than Andrus Martine. His inflamed and glaring eyes were fixed upon them, and he was chanting wildly:

"Mercy on us!" cried Tom; "it's that villain alive, and we believed him dead. Has he the lives of a cat?"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Albion True. "Is he to pursue us to the end of our lives?"

"It looks like it," said Jack King, with a rigid expression upon his face. "I've a mind to drop him."

"He's a curse upon us, mates!" cried Jack Cringle. "It would be no sin to kill him!"

But Tom put up his arm.

"No!" he cried; "for the love of God do not commit murder!"

Jack King lowered his rifle. But all stood looking sullenly at the madman who raved wildly.

"The end is near!" he shrieked. "Satan has called for his own. We are on the downward road, and hell is below us. Curses! Curses! Woe to mankind! The end comes!"

Then he vanished, and when the party reached the spot where he had been, he was not in sight, nor was any trace of him to be found. Jack King was very pale and determined.

"I tell ye!" he gritted. "Ill luck will follow us as long as that scoundrel does. He ought to be disposed of. He's no better than a mad animal!"

"Yet it is a human life, and we must not take it save in self-defense!" said Tom, resolutely.

"Come on, messmates!" cried Jack Cringle, "we've nine or ten miles more to make before we get home. Let's make a clear course!"

They went along the shore for some miles. Here they were obliged to cross a high cliff where the water cut off a path along the shore. From it once more they looked down and beheld the hideous outline of the island. It was certainly a grewsome spectacle, and it gave all a peculiar feeling in the marrow of their bones to reflect that they were castaways upon such an isle. But there was no way but to make the best of it, as all were bound to admit. So they descended and resumed their way along the shore. They were now back again on their own side of the island and not quite three miles from home. Suddenly in turning the corner of a high cliff, Tom Crawford, who was in advance, was given a mighty start. He came face to face with a man. It needed no second glance to recognize him as Harland Myers.

CHAPTER XI.—Myers A Prisoner.

The meeting so sudden and so unexpected was scarcely less of a surprise to one than to the other. For a moment both stood facing each other as if unable to move. Then a sharp, hissing cry escaped Myers.

"Tom Crawford!"

Tom recovered himself in that moment. He

drew back a step and regarded the villain keenly and steadily.

"Harland Myers! You here?"

"And you—where in the name of Satan did you come from? Did you drop from the sky?"

"No," replied Tom, slowly. "We were blown ashore here, while trying to make our way out of these accursed latitudes. But you—are you the man who came ashore in the *Demonio's* boat?"

"I am."

At this moment the others came up. They regarded the villain sternly.

"Well, Harland Myers," said Tom, "our lot is cast together again. Bearing in view your conduct of the past, we cannot but regard you as an enemy. For our own protection we must make you a prisoner!"

Myers recoiled with an oath.

"What if I swear allegiance!" he cried. "Of course I know you have the best of me. You are four or five to one, and this isle is so cursed small that I could not hope to keep out of your way long. Let us be friends in a common extremity."

Tom Crawford looked at the villain with unmitigated astonishment.

"Do I hear aright?" he exclaimed. "You desire our friendship?"

"Yes," replied Myers, with an assumption of friendliness.

"You have nothing in the past to warrant us in accepting you. How are we assured that you will in the future?"

"I give you my oath."

"That is worthless."

Tom's keen gaze pierced the fellow through and through. He read every treacherous purpose of his heart. Thus far the others had remained silent, leaving Tom as sole spokesman. Now Jack King said:

"Tom, I advise ye not to trust him. He has proved himself false once and that is enough."

Tom looked at the others and read the same sentiment in their faces. Myers saw that his game had failed to work. He was a shrewd villain. Ordinarily he would long ere this have tried to break away and escape. But he realized the futility of such a move. On that small strip of land he would be run down and captured with ease. A compromise of some sort was what he must make with his captors. So he said, humbly:

"Well, gentlemen, since you won't affiliate with me, I am obliged to throw myself upon your mercy!"

"What shall that be, mates?" asked Tom, sharply turning to the others.

"If he had his deserts," said bluff Jack Cringle, with clouded brow, "we'd shoot him at ten paces!"

Myers gasped for breath and turned a sickly, livid hue.

"For God's sake, don't kill me!" he groaned. "I'll swear to stand by ye all after this!"

"Well," said Tom, with a great sternness of manner, "we will at least hold him as a prisoner for the present. We can decide what to do with him later!"

"Correct!" cried Albion True. "Now, friends, let us return at once to the cave!"

An expression of relief rested upon Myers' face. His cunning eyes gleamed in a peculiar

manner. Secretly he yet hoped to turn the tables upon his foes. Myers was led between Cringle and Jack King, and the party now set out down the shore toward home. A short while later they came in sight of the reef where the sloop had been wrecked. During the journey Myers became singularly talkative, and recited the incidents of his sojourn aboard the *Demonio*. The castaways were all surprised to learn the truth that he had been set adrift in a boat by *Demonio*.

"It is queer that he did not haul ye up at the yardarm," said Jack King.

"He wanted to consign me to a worse fate."

"And he did."

"You are right."

Indeed, so fair did Myers talk, and so sincere was his manner upon the walk back to the cavern, that had the castaways known less of his true character they might have felt constrained to give him a chance. But Tom Crawford knew instinctively that the fellow's designs upon his life were just as strong and deeply engrafted in his nature as ever.

"He will never cease to seek my life," he reflected. "I must be constantly on my guard."

In due time the cavern was reached. Bowlin was at work on the beach, and Mrs. True and Myrtle had a smoking repast ready for the wanderers. They partook of it readily, for they were intensely weary and hungry after their long tramp. Night was at hand, and all were willing to turn in early. Precautions were taken to secure the prisoner Myers. It was a mooted question what should be done with him. Nobody seemed to have any feasible plan, and it was decided to wait until the morrow. Billy Bowlin volunteered to sit up as sentinel. Myers' hands were bound, and he was given a couch in the furthest part of the cave, where Bowlin was to sit up and keep watch over him. Midnight came, and all in the party were sound asleep—all except Bowlin and the prisoner Myers. The latter lay upon his side and feigned slumber, but in reality his eyes were open and he was watching Bowlin, who sat near by in the full glare of the moonlight, which streamed into the cave from a crevice overhead. Now Bowlin was a bit tired himself. All day long he had worked hard, and the deep breathing of the others proved contagious with him. He made several vain efforts to keep awake, but almost before he knew it he was fast asleep. Myers saw this. A daring and deadly purpose came into his mind. He saw his chance. A claspknife lay upon the ground near Bowlin. If he could get it he might sever his bonds, and then—

"I'll kill every mother's son of 'em but the gal!" he muttered, fiendishly. "She shall be mine, and I will be monarch of all I survey upon this isle! Ha, ha, ha! My time has come after all!"

Slowly and cautiously the villain made his way toward the knife. Now he reached it.

CHAPTER XII.—Myers' Escape.

Harland Myers was sincere in his deadly purpose to kill every one in the party but Myrtle. The moonlight glinted down through the crevice in the cavern roof, and showed all about him as

plain as day. The others of the party were sleeping soundly. Billy Bowlin seemed more profoundly so than any one else. Outside lay the silvery strip of beach, and the waves rolled in lullaby softly upon the sands. Now Myers reached the claspknife. His hands and feet were bound, but his hands were not behind him, and he easily opened the knife. It was but a moment's work for him to cut the bonds which confined his wrists and ankles. He was free. The villain drew himself up, and for a moment, so powerful was the waves of jubilant feeling which swept over him that he could hardly refrain from giving a yell of triumph. But he controlled himself and then again bent down with the claspknife in his hand. He was directly over Albion True. He hesitated a moment. Even his hardened soul inclined to aversion of the revolting deed he contemplated.

"They must all die?" he whispered, fiercely. "There is no safety for me until all are disposed of."

So he lifted the knife. The jugular vein of the sleeping man was exposed. One quick slash of the knife would sever it and end the sleeper's life without an outcry. And yet he hesitated to give it. It was a rare stroke of fortune for Mr. True. For at that moment some strange pre-science had awakened Jack King. The mate's eyes opened wide and without moving he was instantly wide awake. And he was just in time to see the knife uplifted over Albion True. Jack was ever a light sleeper and had quick command of his senses. Swift as lightning, a comprehension of all rushed over him. He instantly made quick action. Jack always slept with his revolver by his side. This was now instantly in his hand, and raising it, he fired. Crack! The report awoke the echoes of the cavern. Instantly every sleeper was awake. The bullet missed its mark. This was the heart of the would-be murderer, but it struck the handle of the knife and shivered it in Myers' hands.

So swift had the act been performed that Myers was for an instant dumfounded. King would have fired again, but other forms intervened, as all scrambled to their feet. Myers took advantage of the momentary confusion to spring out of the cave.

"Stop him!" shouted Jack King; "don't let him escape!"

Tom Crawford and Cringle were instantly after the villain. But he was too quick for them. He reached the strip of beach beyond. When his pursuers emerged from the cave he was gone from sight. An ineffectual search was made. But not a trace of him could be found. Then the party met just below the cavern's mouth and explanations followed. Jack King told his story.

"It was a close call for you, Mr. True!" he said.

"I think we all owe you our lives, Jack!" cried Tom. "He would have killed us all, no doubt!"

"It is not safe to leave him at large!" declared Albion True.

"Well, we will search for him in daylight," declared Tom. "He cannot get off the isle and we are sure to find him."

With this conclusion all returned to the cavern.

But there was no more sleep for any of the party that night. They sat up and discussed the affair.

"I shall never feel safe while that villain remains on this isle!" declared Mr. King, and Myrtle echoed the sentiment.

Daylight came, and after the morning meal it was decided to organize a search party to recapture Hyers.

"Both Myers and that madman Martine must be caught!" declared Tom Crawford, "our lives will never be safe while they are at large!"

"But what shall we do with them after we capture them?" asked Jack King.

"That we can decide upon after we get them," said Tom. "The first and important thing is to capture them."

"I believe you are right, Tom," agreed Albion True, and this sentiment was shared by all.

No time was lost in setting out upon the quest. It was decided to leave Albion True and Bowlin with the women. The others were to conduct the search. All were confident of quickly recapturing the wretches. Indeed, it could hardly be seen how they could avoid capture. The party struck out into the interior of the isle. Soon they were clambering over rough ledges and boulders. The skeleton island was truly a barren speck upon that mighty expanse of the South Pacific. More than ever a sense of utter desolation settled down over the souls of the castaways. That terrible sense of being utterly lost was nigh powerful enough to affect reason. But Tom Crawford was the enlivening spirit of the party. There was an element of buoyant hope in the young man's composition which proved now a Godsend to all. With pleasant words of interest and cheer he constantly endeavored to hold all up bravely.

Jack King stood by him strongest of all. The superstitious natures of Cringle and Bowlin could not collapse beneath such a powerful stimulant. This was their ultimate redemption. For some time they continued their quest among the rocky fastnesses. Cringle was the first to find a clew. He came unexpectedly upon a sort yielding patch of black earth. In this was the imprint of a man's foot. That it was the footprint of the villain Myers there was no reason to doubt. The shape of the imprint and a remembrance of the shape of the villain's foot established this beyond doubt.

"Now we have the trail!" cried Tom Crawford; "let us find the bird!"

"It leads to the north!" cried Jack King. "What if—"

He ceased speaking. At that moment his eye caught a strange sight. Not fifty yards ahead was a mighty ledge of rock, and directly where this met the soil was a deep and yawning crevice. This was full large enough to admit the body of a man. Jack pointed to it and cried in a thrilling voice:

"Do you suppose that is his hiding-place?"

All exchanged swift and startled glances. The assumption seemed reasonable enough. The trail certainly led toward it. There was no great hesitation. Tom Crawford went forward boldly, trying to penetrate the darkness of the place. He reached the mouth of the crevice, and then knelt down and peered into it. For a moment

he remained in this position. Then a sharp exclamation escaped him.

"How is it, lad?" replied Tom, excitedly; "it seems to lead down into the center of the isle. What is strange is the fact that it is as light as day in there!"

With exclamations of wonder the others flung themselves down and gazed into the place. There was no doubt but that it was a cavern of great depth, and that it descended below the level of the sea.

The three men, Jack Cringle, Jack King and Tom Crawford, now entered the cavern. For hours they passed through passages, but no trace of the villains could be found. There was a ledge of what looked like rock jutting out from the cavern wall, and Tom Crawford seated himself upon it. The apparent stone crumbled beneath him and he fell into a rolling heap of old Spanish ducats and doubloons. For a few seconds not one in the party could speak.

"The hidden treasure of some pirate!" declared Tom.

"But of what use is it to us?" asked King.

"No use," answered Tom. "Come, mates, let us go."

With this all turned away. The search was continued, but no trace of the two villains could be found. But at this moment a trembling of the ground was felt. All hands started pell-mell for the entrance, and a few minutes later were in the open air.

"Let us call it off for to-day," said Tom.

The others agreed, and a start was made.

As they joined the others a fear came over Tom as he thought of the trembling felt in the cavern. What is the island was one thrown up by an earthquake and was liable to sink at any time?

The days came and went and brought no hope of escape to the castaways. Nothing was seen of Martine or Myers. Soon it was apparent by the steady rising of the water upon the sand that the island was gradually sinking, as Tom was fearful it would if it was a volcanic isle. A move was now made to visit the phosphorescent cave again. It was set in motion. As they reached the mouth of the cavern a strange spectacle was witnessed. A shrill call was heard and on turning in that direction whom should all see but Martine springing from rock to rock. But as pursuit was given the maniac was seen to enter the cave. Our friends reached the cave and entered. Myers and Martine were facing each other in the middle of the cavern chamber. A moment later and they were in deadly combat. Myers was doing his utmost to knife the maniac.

and wily and seemed to have little trouble in keeping his foe at arm's length. Thus the contest waged for a time. But it could not last always. A change came. Fate decided against Myers. Suddenly his foot slipped, the knife was hurled from his grasp and fell ringing to the ground. Martine's arms like the tenacles of an octopus closed about his neck. His talon fingers clutched the villain's windpipe. In vain Myers tried to shake off that grasp. He gasped, sputtered and fought madly, but his strength gradually failed and he began to succumb. Down to the ground his foe bore him. Then Martine seized the knife which lay within reach. Until this moment the castaways imbued with horror had watched the awful scene. Now the spell was broken.

"My God, that is awful!" cried Tom Crawford, who could never bear to see human life taken. "We must stop that!"

And he made a leap forward, but he was too late. The deadly knife went home. Into the villain's heart it plunged. The end of Harland Myers' career had come. With a maniacal shriek Martine was upon his feet. He turned to see Tom Crawford coming for him full speed. Tom would have checked himself, but was not in time to avoid the rush made at him by Martine.

"Curse ye, die!" yelled the madman.

He made a terrible blow at Tom, but the latter dodged it. Only one thing saved Tom's life. This was the quick action upon the part of Jack King.

"Back there," shouted the mate.

Then King lifted his revolver and fired. The bullet went straight to the mark, striking Martine full in the chest. The maniac dropped in a heap. The end had come. At last the victims of the Syril's wreck were avenged. Silently the castaways stood over the corpses of the two misguided wretches. They could feel no compunction. There was no feeling that King had stained his soul by his act.

"You have saved my life!" said Tom, gratefully. "I shall not forget it."

"It is nothing," said the mate. "I am glad to have rid the earth of so great a monster!"

"Amen!" said the others.

Tom then proposed to dig graves in the cave, and deposit the bodies in them. This was done. Then it was decided to return to the cliff camp. Leaving the opposite shore Tom Crawford walked down to a mark on the beach which had been set to record the rise of the waters. Tom, two days before, had set the stake in the verge of the surf. It had remained there all the previous day without change. Now he gave a cry of horror. It was fully six feet out into the breakers. The island had settled this much in twenty-four hours.

"My God!" cried Tom, in despair. "The isle is settling again. What shall we do?"

The hope which for a time had buoyed the party up was once more shattered. Agony of spirit was upon them. Slowly and dejectedly they were preparing to ascend the cliff when a loud shout from above claimed their attention. Down the cliff came Albion True with white, eager face and rapid step.

"Hello, friends!" he shouted. "Cast your eyes seaward! A sail!"

CHAPTER XIII.—The Demonio Again.

Our castaways watched the struggle with a strange sort of fascination. The contestants appeared oblivious of their presence. For a time neither seemed to have the advantage, and it was a question as to which would win. It was a battle to the death, and possessed a horrid interest to the witnesses. One or the other of the contestants must die. Madly Martine tried to overcome his opponent. But Myers was cool

"A sail!"

The maddening cry went up. It was like a voice of promise from the spheres. All strained their gaze seaward. Sure enough. There far out on the blue surface was a white ship. A ship was passing. For a moment the castaways were paralyzed with indecision.

"A ship!"

"What shall we do?"

"How can we hail it?"

At the common impulse all rushed up to the highest point on the cliff. Here again a signal fire was built. And here again they hoped and watched as before that it might be seen. But they were forced to admit that the ship behaved very strangely. It seemed for a time to fill away before the wind. Then it would luff, come about and stand down for the isle only to change its course of a sudden and go off on a new tack. This sort of maneuvering was kept up for hours. It was watched with deep interest and utter amazement.

"Well, I'm beat!" cried Jack King. "What are those people up to, anyway? They must see our signal!"

"It looks like boys' play to me!" cried Cringle. "No seaman would handle a ship that way!"

"That's right, messmate," replied Bowlin with conviction. "It's a parcel of greenhorns aboard her."

The mystery of the distant ship only intensified as time went on. Her actions grew all the while stranger. For hours the castaways watched her. Then suddenly she seemed to head straight for the island and hold her course.

"She's comin' at last!" cried Bowlin, wildly. "We'll be saved, mates!"

Dead on to the island the ship seemed to be coming. She stood up bold and strong under main fore and topsails, and her hull seemed to rise out of the ocean as she drew nearer. Not a man was to be seen in the rigging or at the rail of the ship. If they saw the island beacon they gave no sign of such a thing. This puzzled the castaways not a little.

"That's queer!" cried Tom Crawford. "It can't be that they are all asleep. What is the meaning of it?"

Suddenly her head was seen to come up, and with a peculiar rolling motion she came about. As her broadside was thus exposed to full view, a tremendous shout went up from the castaways. It was a yell of horror and dismay.

CHAPTER XIV.—Which Is the Last.

The ship's movement in coming about was a peculiar one. To the experienced eye it was as if there had been no master hand at the helm, and that it had come about of its own volition actuated by a cross current. And now, full broadside on, it was seen that the vessel lacked a helmsman. Neither was there a crew visible on her decks. She was plainly a deserted ship, drifting about at the mercy of wind and wave. Her crew had either deserted her or were dead. She now lay for a moment almost becalmed, but yet drifting rapidly into the outer reach of wind, which would undoubtedly take

her to sea again. The party on shore saw this at once.

"Can we not reach her?"

Cringle answered this query instantly. Off came his jacket and shoes. Through the surf he dashed. He was a most powerful swimmer. The castaways with bated breath watched his course. It was a critical time. All depended upon his reaching the ship before the vessel could fill away to sea. If she should once succeed in drifting off the headland, she might go to sea and never be seen again. The mere fact that here was offered to the castaways a certain chance to escape from the isle increased the strain upon the minds of all. Prayers were upon their lips, and every nerve was strained. Would Cringle succeed? It was a terrible question.

"He is the best swimmer of our party!" declared Jack King.

"I pray Heaven he will succeed!" breathed Tom.

He thought of Myrtle and their love. If only fortune would enable them to really make an escape from the isle, he foresaw a life of enjoyment. But it seemed too much to hope for, fate had been so long against them that it seemed as if it must always remain so. On and on went Cringle breasting the waves. The plucky sailor saw but a few yards between him and the drifting ship. Then suddenly the wind caused it to drift down toward him. It was his chance and he seized it. A cable trailed in the water. Cringle seized it, and a moment later was going aboard hand over hand like a monkey. Those on shore saw this and cheered wildly. Cringle reached the rail of the ship. Over he went. He reached the chains, and seizing a hatchet, began to cut away at the stays of the best bower. In a few moments the huge anchor strained at its fastenings. It swayed and went overboard. Down it went with a mighty splash into the waters of the bay. The prize was secured. Then without pausing to ascertain the state of affairs aboard ship, Cringle went aloft like a monkey.

It was but a moment's work to cut the tackle and drop the sails. The ship steadied herself and the strain on the anchor chain at once ceased. Then Cringle rushed down to the deck. As he went to the forward boat to cut it away, he gave a thrilled start. Upon the thwart was the name:

"Demonio!"

"Great gunwales!" gasped the sailor. "It's the bloody pirate ship! But what's become of her crew?"

He was so impelled by curiosity that he went to the cabin stairs. Down he went slowly. There in a chair at the cabin table was the figure of a man. But a glance at his livid, rigid face told Cringle the truth—that he was dead.

"The plague!" gasped Cringle, as he noted the unmistakable mark upon the face of the corpse.

Before the dead man was a pile of manuscript. He had been writing. Cringle was scholar enough to read the last inscription on the paper:

"I am the last man left on board. The cursed disease has carried all away. To-day I threw overboard the body of Luigi Centari. Death confronts me. Ah, Captain Demonio's name is

sure to be wiped from the list of South Sea pirates. Curses on my fate, I die!"

The journal broke off here. Cringle shuddered and turned away from the dead pirate. But he had no fear of the plague-smitten ship. Cutting away the boat he rowed ashore and told the story. All listened aghast. For a time it was seriously debated whether it were best to risk the plague or to remain on the isle and die in that manner. Finally it was decided to take chances aboard the ship. Demonio was given impromptu burial in the sea. The ship was thoroughly fumigated. Then sail was set, and the castaways left the skeleton island behind them forever. For days and weeks the ship kept on its course. It was impossible to set any accurate course. But the castaways clung to hope. And so it happened that one day Cringle came rushing into the cabin, crying wildly:

"She dips, sir—she dips!"

It was true that once again the needle dipped to the north. The rest was easy. In due time Honolulu was reached. The plague did not molest the voyagers. Its virus had been left behind. But the Demonio was sold for a round sum. There was enough of treasure aboard to enrich all. One day a steamer carrying the wanderers sailed into the Golden Gate. Home again in dead old America, our adventurers entered upon a life of happiness. And here we will feel constrained to leave them. Myrtle became the happy wife of Tom Crawford. The others all found happy walks in life, and with this announcement we have reached the end of our story.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOSS OF THE MESSENGER BOYS; or, BORN TO GOOD LUCK."

IN AFRICA'S JUNGLES

In Central Africa, as in the great valley of the Amazon and the hinterlands of the Guianas up in the northwest of South America, there is in the dense roof of the lofty jungle overhead another world, unknown, unseen and forever far out of the reach of puny man, a world about which we know very little, or it is populated by a host of creatures that never come down to earth.

In the same part of unknown Africa a race of tree beings are said to exist, who live in the tops of the trees and are sheltered from enemies by the dense foliage. These folk, two toed and claw handed, pass from tree to tree with the ease and activity of monkeys, and are of a particularly fe-

rocious nature. Then there are dwarfs in Central Africa which live like wild animals among the rocks and bushes. Their projecting jaws and protruding lips, slender, ill-shaped legs and protruding bellies give them the true apelike appearance. They are singularly timid and flee at the sight of strangers.

As mysterious is the race of gigantic natives in the unknown deserts north of Uaso Nyiro and the Lorian Swamp, East Africa. This strange race is known by tradition to the natives now inhabiting the land west of the Juba in the north and the Tana in the south. Their name appears to be "the Maanthinle," and tradition has it they are Christians and originally came from Abyssinia.

Until pestilence and native wars broke them they are said to have cultivated large areas, used irrigation to raise crops, owned camels and lived in great circular houses, the huge stones of which testify to their strength. Their hoes, it has been stated, were so large and strong that a local native of the present day could not lift one. Two of this giant race could not only kill an elephant with spears, but eat it up afterward.

Just as the data regarding these giants cannot be denied, neither can data concerning the hippo horse be cast aside merely because they refer to what appears to be a survivor of prehistoric ages.

A short time ago the press was announcing that an explorer in Africa had been put to flight by a weird and formidable animal such as we come across in a nightmare or a dream. The fugitive stated his strange enemy must have had a body more than twenty feet long and of great girth, an upright tusk on its nose and with the fore parts of a horse and the hind parts of a cow.

An explorer, H. E. Lee, first encountered it, though the natives have always spoken of its existence. He was creeping into position for a shot at a hippopotamus when he saw in the background of the pool, slowly and meditatively chewing water weed, the strangest animal yet known. On its nose it carried two very sharp pointed horns or tusks, not curved but sticking up straight. The front of its head had all the appearance of a hippo, but the cheeks and ears and mouth were like those of a horse. It had a mane of red hair, and while its upper body was that of the hippo, yet the legs and feet were those of the horse. Its neck was not short and thick like a hippo's, but gracefully arched and elongated like that of the horse. Its tail, long and bushy, was covered with red hair.

Lee shot this amazing animal and found it measured over twenty-one feet in length, with a girth of eighteen feet. Skeletons of a creature of similar build have been unearthed in America.

CURRENT NEWS

DISAPPEARING MONEY

In an effort to avert the small-change crisis France issued bronze-aluminum "jetons," or one-franc and two-franc tokens. These are disappearing at the rate of 800,000 a day—almost as fast as the mint turns them out. According to authorities these tokens, though intrinsically almost valueless, are going into the "woolen stockings" of the notoriously thrifty French to join the silver coins that vanished long ago. Means are being sought to force the people to disgorge the jetons.

NO OWNER FOR SILVER BARS

Bars of silver worth \$2,000 were returned by the police of Buffalo, N. Y., June 24 to Lewis Solomon, a street car conductor, who dug them up in a grove on the bank of the Niagara River in March. Several firms examined the bullion, but none could claim it as theirs, and the mystery of its ownership has not been solved.

Solomon came upon the treasure while digging for fishworms. It was wrapped in an old newspaper and a bag and apparently had been under the ground for many years.

NEW STAMPS ARE ON SALE

The new special delivery stamps, showing a messenger boy on a motorcycle delivering a letter at a colonial house, were placed on sale July 12 at the Philatelic Agency of the Postoffice Department and Postmaster General Work made the first

purchase. He will give the stamp to President Harding with a dye-proof prepared from the master proof of the stamp.

The second stamp went to Mrs. Irving Glover, wife of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, who is an enthusiastic philatelist.

In connection with the sale of the new stamps, the Postoffice Department announced that future issues of postage stamps will be in such designs and colors as to be "easily distinguishable and memorized."

A COFFEE POT FOR EARRING

A letter from P. Neyens, a New Guinea missionary, contains an interesting description of the natives of that island, known as the Kaja Kaja, says *Le Petit Parisien*, Paris.

These savages, who have a reputation for bravery and are powerfully built, paint their foreheads red or black, with white or yellow circles around the eyes. Their nostrils are frequently adorned with the claws of birds or prey or the tusks of wild pigs. From the lobes of their ears the most extraordinary variety of objects may be suspended, M. Neyens describing one warrior who wore an old coffee pot as an ear ornament.

The Kaja Kaja never bathe. Instead the body is rubbed with a variety of oils which give off an insufferable odor, augmented, it may be added, by the decomposing skins which they wear as arm decorations.

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Chased To China

— OR —

HOW DAN SAVED HIS GOOD NAME

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"Perhaps they have no hotel picked out, uncle," said Henrietta, "and the same place would suit them, especially as English is spoken there as much as French."

"That would suit me," promptly spoke up Dan.

Dick smiled slyly at him, but said that the Hotel America would do as well as any other.

"You'll like it because you will get some American dishes there," the New York man said. "The last time I was there I got pumpkin pie, and it made me think of home. Suppose you give directions about your baggage at once, and it will be delivered at the hotel the same time that our trunks arrive there?"

"All right," said Dick, and got up from his chair to go along with Mr. Parmlee to have the matter attended to, leaving Dan and the girl to converse in animated tones. The girl showed plainly that she liked his company, and as the young fellow found that she talked sensibly and entertainingly, he took great pleasure in her society.

Had Dick been in his place, that good-hearted but rather vain person would have been making love to the girl in ten minutes, but Dan was not that kind of a boy. He could see that the girl admired him, and it pleased him immensely, for she had caught his fancy more than any girl he had ever met.

The vessel got away on time, and began to make her way across the channel. When they started the weather was fairly clear, but they had not gone a mile when a dense fog came up.

It surrounded the vessel like a gray blanket, and it was impossible to see twenty feet from the rail.

Then there soon followed the calls of look-outs and the various tones of vessels that sounded their whistles.

The fog made headway dangerous, and the craft was soon slowed down to quarter speed, and in that manner picked her way carefully through the fog, blowing her whistle at frequent intervals, and constantly assured by the call of the lookout forward.

"This fog is chilling, Miss Parmlee," said Dan, rising from his chair as he spoke, "and I think you had better let me escort you to the cabin until it clears."

"Thanks," said the girl, and got up from her seat, and at that moment, without any other warning than the belated cry of the lookout, the huge bow of a tramp steamer showed up within ten feet of the port bow of the channel packet.

Then came cries and screams, hasty orders, and

in an instant the bow of the big tramp steamer struck the little packet with sufficient force to make her careen sideways.

Up went the port bow for fully six feet, and down went the starboard side of the smaller craft for just the same distance.

Dan and the girl were not more than three feet from the starboard rail when this happened, and the boy made a quick clutch at the girl's hand as she was rising from the chair.

He missed her, and Henrietta, who was now on her feet, spun around from the effort she made to steady herself, and with a scream of terror slipped down the inclined deck and over the rail that was dipping towards the water, and into the channel she went.

Under ordinary circumstances this would not have been such a dangerous matter, for well disciplined crews lower boats in less than half a minute and dashed to the rescue, but the presence of the fog made the danger unusually great, for in a moment the girl would be out of sight. Then, additionally, all was confusion on board the packet as a result of the collision.

"Girl overboard!" shouted Dan, and his cry was taken up by others who had seen the girl flash over the rail while they were clinging to such things as came handiest, and then, without even removing the cap that he had been wearing, Dan went over after her.

Henrietta had gone down when she struck the water, but came up just as Dan made his dive. He could see her just appearing as he reached the water, and he curved his back to make his dive as shallow as possible.

She could not swim, and was going down again when he reached her side with three swift strokes and caught her by the hair. Holding her up with one hand and swimming with the other, he spoke quietly to the girl.

"We may have to be in the water a considerable time before they can lower a boat and find us in the fog," he said, "and if you struggle or try to hold me tightly you may drown us both. I can support you in the water for hours, if need be, if you will do as I tell you."

"I am not frightened now," she said, "and will do as you tell me."

"Then I will swim quickly in front of you," said Dan, "and all you need to do is to place your hands lightly on my shoulders, and in that manner I can swim with you until we are picked up."

He worked his way around in front of the girl, let go of her hold, and she did as he told her, and at that moment, fortunately, the fog lifted as suddenly as it had come down, and not more than twenty boat lengths away they saw the packet, once more on a fairly even keel, and also saw that a boat was being lowered.

Within five minutes from the time that the boat was lowered from the vessel, the boy and girl were hauled out of the water, very wet, but not otherwise affected by their unexpected experience.

Parmlee hurried to the side and took the girl in his arms as she was handed up, and said to Dan:

"I can only thank you, you young hero, but I owe you a debt of gratitude and hope that the time will come when I can repay it."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

TURTLE SNAPS OFF HIS NOSE

Because he became inquisitive and wanted to see where a turtle put its head when it drew back into its shell, Gustive Gustafson, a Swede, of Pittsburgh, Pa., is minus his nose. The turtle popped out its head and snapped off the Swede's nose when he was peering into the head end of the shell. Gustafson purchased the turtle, an eight-pounder, from a fish dealer in Homestead, and was going home when the accident occurred.

FOUND LARGE SUMS, GOT SMALL REWARDS

"Honesty is the best policy—please have a banana!" Mrs. Sarah Kingscote said to the policeman who accompanied her to Blackburn's, the wholesale fruiterers. She found a wallet containing \$5,000 in notes, and took it to a policeman. Together they examined it and learned the name of the owner. When she returned the wallet he gave her one dozen overripe banana as her reward.

Her sentiment must have been shared by William Johnston, a Glasgow dairyman, who found two mail bags containing more than \$8,000 in cash a few weeks ago and returned them to the post-office. He has just received an official reward of thirty shillings.

A POWERFUL POISON

A poison, the most powerful known, is reported to have been extracted by a German chemist from the seeds of the ricinus, the familiar castor oil plant, and has been attracting much attention on account of its remarkable properties. Its power is estimated to be so great that a grain—about a thirtieth of an ounce—would kill a million and a half guinea pigs. If administered so as to cause severe illness without death, it gives immunity against a larger quantity, and the dose can be gradually increased until more than a thousand times as much can be endured as would kill an untreated animal. Though arsenic, morphine and other poisons can be taken in larger and larger quantity, says *Popular Mechanics*, nothing approaching this marvellous increase in dose can be borne.

SAW TREES IN 100 FATHOMS OF WATER

Among the achievements of the ill-fated Shackleton expedition, it is claimed, is the discovery that diamonds exist in Antarctica. It is reported that a small island was found near South Georgia, where the mineralogist of the Quest, Sir Ernest's ship, made a large excavation and panned the soil, declaring that it was the exact type of alluvial deposit which bears diamonds elsewhere in the world. Further investigations will be made by experts.

The expedition also discovered Gargentum marine forests. They found the tops of trees above the water, and when soundings were taken the depth was 100 fathoms. The explorers believe they have found the tallest trees in the world.

Reports received here are that the Quest found

fish so plentiful in the Antarctic that it was unnecessary for the members of the expedition to bait their hooks.

WALKING ON WATER

An Italian electrician has invented an ingenious form of water-shoe to which he gives the name of "hydro ski." Compared with so-called water-shoes or skis already on the market it differs in the method of propulsion. Unlike forms introduced in the past, the present shoes, which are canvas pontoons, are provided with two sets of cross arms or axles to which paddles are fitted to their extremities.

The paddle is fastened to one pontoon by means of an eccentric axle, explains *Popular Science Monthly*, and to the other pontoon by another eccentric axle. Three axles are not in alignment, so that by shifting the weight of the body from one shoe to the other alternately, the paddle wheel is turned at a fair rate of speed with very little effort. Steering is facilitated by the use of a double-bladed paddle, which also enables the operator to maintain his balance.

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A Locomotive Hero

By D. W. STEVENS

Well, gentlemen, if you wish it, I'll tell you the story. When I was a youth of nineteen and lived with my parents in a Pennsylvania town, I had a taste for railroading, although I had been educated for loftier pursuits.

During my college vacation I lounged about the station almost constantly, making friends with the trainmen, and especially with a driver named Silas Markley. I became much attached to this man, notwithstanding he was forty years old, and by no means a sociable fellow.

He was my ideal of a brave, skilful, thorough-bred driver, and I looked up to him as something of a hero. He was not a married man, but lived alone with his old mother.

When Markley's fireman left him, I induced him to let me take his place during the remainder of my vacation. He hesitated for some time before he consented to humor my boyish whim, but he finally yielded, and I was in great glee. The fact was, that in my idleness and the over-worked state of my brain, I craved the excitement as a confirmed drunkard does liquor, and besides, I had such longing dreams of the fiery ride through the hills, mounted literally on the iron horse.

But there came a time when I got my fill of excitement. Mrs. Markley one day formed a plan which seemed to give her a good deal of happiness. It was her son's birthday; and she wanted to go down to Philadelphia in the train without letting him know anything about it, and there purchase a present for him. She took me into her confidence and had me assist her. I arranged the preliminaries and got her into the train without being noticed by Markley, who, of course, was busy with his engine.

The old lady was in high glee over the bit of innocent deception she was practicing on her son. She enjoined me again not to tell Silas, and then I left her and took my place.

It was a midsummer day, and the weather was delightful. The train was neither an express nor an accommodation, but one which stopped at the principal stations on the route.

On this occasion, as there were two specials on the line, it was run to telegraph; that is, the driver has simply to obey the instructions which he receives at each station, so that he is but as a machine in the hands of one controller, who directs all trains from a central point and has the whole line under his eye.

Well, we started without mishap and up to time, and easily reached the first station in the time allotted to us. As we stopped there a boy ran alongside with the telegram, which he handed to the driver. The next moment I heard a smothered exclamation from Markley.

"Go back," he said to the boy; "tell Williams to have the message repeated; there's a mistake."

The boy dashed off; in ten minutes he came flying back. "Had it repeated," he panted; "Wil-

liams is storming at you; says there's no mistake, and you'd best get on." He thrust the second message up as he spoke.

Markley read it, and stood hesitating for half a minute. There was dismay and utter perplexity in the expression of his face as he looked at the telegram and the long train behind him. His lips moved as if he were calculating chances, and his eyes suddenly quailed as if he saw death at the end of the calculation. I was watching him with considerable curiosity. I ventured to ask him what was the matter, and what he was going to do.

"I'm going to obey," he replied, curtly. The engine gave a long shriek of horror that made me start, as if it was Markley's own voice. The next instant we rushed out of the station and dashed through low-lying farms at a speed which seemed dangerous to me.

"Put on more coal," said Markley.

I shoveled it in, but took time.

I was alarmed at the stern, cold rigidity of the man. His pallor was becoming frightful. I threw in the coal. At least we must stop at Dufreme. That was the next halt. The little town approached. As the first house came into view, the engine sent its shrieks of warning; it grew louder—louder.

We dashed into the street, up to the station where a group of passengers waited, and passed it without the halt of an instant, catching a glimpse of the appalled faces and the waiting crowd. Then we were in the fields again. The speed now became literally breathless, the furnace glared red-hot. The heart, the velocity, the terrible nervous strain of the man beside me, seemed to weight the air. I found myself drawing long, stentorious breaths like one drowning.

I heaped in the coal at intervals as he bade me. I did it because I was oppressed by an odd sense of duty which I never had in my ordinary brainwork. Since then I have understood how it is that dull, ignorant men, without a spark of enthusiasm, show such heroism as soldiers, firemen and captains of wrecked vessels. It is this overpowering sense of routine duty. It's a finer thing than sheer bravery in my idea. However, I began to think that Markley was mad—laboring under some frenzy from drink, though I had never seen him touch liquor.

"Markley," I shouted, "you are running this train into the jaws of death."

"I know it," he replied quietly.

"Your mother is aboard this train."

"Heavens!"

He staggered to his feet. But even then he did not remove his eye from the gauge.

"Make up the fire, Jack," very quietly.

"I will not. You may murder yourself and mother, but you shall not murder me."

He looked at me. His kindly gray eyes glared like those of a wild beast. But he controlled himself a moment.

"I could throw you off this engine and make short work of you," he said. "But look here, do you see the station yonder?"

I saw a faint streak against the sky about five miles ahead.

"I was told to reach that station by six o'clock,"

he continued. "The express train meeting us is due now. I ought to have laid by for it at Du-frame. I was told to come on. The track is a single one. Unless I can make the siding at the station in three minutes we shall meet in yonder hollow."

"Somebody's blundered?" I said.

"Yes, I think so."

I said nothing. I threw on coal; if I had had petroleum I should have thrown it on; but never was I calmer in my life. When death actually stares a man in the face it often frightens him into the most perfect composure. Markley pushed the valve still farther. The engine began to give a strange, panting sound. Far off to the south I could see the bituminous black smoke of a train. I looked at Markley inquiringly. He nodded. It was the express! I stooped to the fire.

"No more," he said.

I looked across the clear summer sky at the gray smoke of the peaceful little village, and beyond that at a black line coming closer, closer, across the sky. Then I turned to the watch. In one minute more—well, I confess I sat down and buried my face in my hands. I don't think I tried to pray. I had a confused thought of mangled, dying men and women—mothers and their babies.

There was a terrible shriek from the engine against which I leaned. Another in my face. A hot, hissing tempest swept past me. I looked up. We were on the siding, and the express had gone by. It grazed our end carriage in passing. In a sort of delirious joy I sprang up and shouted to Markley. He did not speak. He sat there immovable and cold as a stone. I went to the train and brought his mother to him, and when he opened his eyes and took the old lady's hand in his I turned away.

Yes, gentlemen, I have been in many a railway accident, but I have always considered that the closest shave I ever had.

LEGEND OF SWEET'S TREASURE

The mysterious visit of a party of Cherokee Indians from Oklahoma to Wolfe county, in the hills of southeastern Kentucky, recently has revived speculation and interest with regard to the lost silver mine of John Swift. It has revived the old belief among the people who live in that section of State that the Cherokees have a traditional secret—handed down from generation to generation since 140 years ago. It was 140 years ago that Swift was killed by a party of Indians, who took the crude maps and charts of his discoveries from his body.

It is a fact that about thirty years ago another party of Indians—Cherokees, and beyond doubt progenitors of those at the present moment in the hills of Wolfe county—came, bringing maps. Moreover, they are said by men who lived then and who are still alive to have discovered a chest of silver coin. Hence it is the general belief now that the mine is in Wolfe county.

The *Greenup Independent's* report continues:

"At an early day, silver money was in circulation in the settlement of what is now West Virginia said to have been made by Swift. It was

free from alloy, and of such a description as to indicate that it had not passed through an established mint.

"A bar of pure silver was found some years ago near a small mill in Carter county which was thought to have been smelted from ore obtained from silver mines said to exist in that country. And within the past few days a piece of ore, which has every appearance of silver ore, and a small quantity of metal which is said to be silver, was shown by a gentleman of undoubted veracity, who testifies that he got the ore in the mountains of Kentucky, and with his own hands smelted the metal from ore he obtained in the mountains."

Yet, convincing as that is, there is more convincing evidence. From the papers of the late Wood C. Dollins of Mt. Sterling, Ky., are taken the following extracts:

"A memorandum of John Swift's journal has fallen into our hands, which is an exceedingly curious document. It describes with some minuteness the journeys of 1761-2-4-7-8-9, and alludes to three other trips of which he kept no account. This is a part of Swift's journal: 'On the 1st of September, 1769, we left between 22,000 and 30,000 dollars and crows on large creek running near a South course. Close to the spot we marked our names (Swift, Jefferson, Munday and others) on a beech tree, with compass, square and trowel. No great distance from this place we left 15,000 coins of the same kind, marking three or four trees with markers. Not far from these we left the prize, near a forked white oak, and about three feet underground, and laid two long stones across it, marking several stones close about it. At the forks of Sandy, close by the fork, is a small rock, having a spring in one end of it. Between it and a small branch, we hid a prize underground; it was valued at 6,000 dollars. We likewise left 3,000 dollars buried in rocks of the rock-house.'"

ABOUT LITHUANIA

How many people have known what Lithuania is, where it is, who the Lithuanians are, and what their history has been? Not many, and yet Lithuania has had a dramatic, if a rather unchronicled, record.

Lithuania is the northernmost barrier between Russia and Germany, a strategic position, which, if she is independent, shuts the gate between East Prussia and Russia, and if she is overwhelmed, opens the gate. Lithuania is north of Poland with a sea coast line of 100 miles on the Baltic Sea.

Lithuania has retained her national characteristics in spite of hundreds of years of attempted denationalization by Germans, Poles and Russians successively. Edicts against her language, her religion, her customs, political repression and economic tyranny have all failed to keep down the little nation of 7,000,000 people.

Lithuania's people are neither Teutonic nor Slavic, but are a separate branch of the Indo-European race, with a language closely resembling the ancient Sanscrit. In appearance, Lithuanians are large and powerful, with fair hair and blue eyes. They are an industrious, tenacious people, with a high appreciation of culture, a rare capacity for work, both manual and mental.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, AUGUST 9, 1922

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

BEE SWARM SETTLED ON SPARE TIRE

Humming like an airplane, a swarm of bees sailed over the main street of Corning, N. Y., and, seeking a point to park, volplaned to the spare tire of a car occupied by a touring party. A farmer borrowed a barrel and hived the colony.

TREE FULL OF HONEY

A large tree was cut by Frank Harris at the foot of the Tuscarora Mountain, near his home, at Charleston, W. Va. It was a large hollow pine and was packed full of honey. The largest comb was nine and a half feet long. In some places it was four inches thick. The tree contained nine large pails of choice honey.

DIES AT 134; HAD SON OF 7

Among the many mourners at the funeral of "Uncle" John Shell, 134 years old, were his two sons, William, ninety, and Albert, seven, it became known at Louisville, Ky., when news was received that the oldest white man in the world had died July 6 at his home at Greasy Creek.

Albert is the offspring of a second marriage, "Uncle" John's first wife, who is said to have been two years his senior, having died about ten years ago.

He is said to have been born in Tennessee Sept. 3, 1788, the son of Samuel Shell, a gunmaker.

In 1919 he took his first airplane ride. On his visits to cities "Uncle" John told newspaper interviewers that he remembered having seen Daniel Boone and recalled the general mourning that followed the death of George Washington. He said he was too old to enlist in the Mexican War.

TO DAM NIAGARA RIVER

After more than ten years' investigation the International Waterways Commission recommended through the President the construction of a submerged dam, or weir, in the Niagara River, to raise the level of Lake Erie and its upper waters. The commission stated the value of the proposed work to Lake Erie ports could hardly be estimated, and that it would result in extensive improvements to harbors and docks.

The cost of the weir and consequent works to avoid damage to property is estimated at \$3,500,000. The dam would raise the level of the Niagara three feet for a distance of one and a half miles. The commission suggested the construction of a levee to prevent damage to adjoining property. The commission reported that the plan would raise the mean level of Lake St. Clair .23 foot and that of Lake Huron .09 foot.

The commission also reported that the weir would eliminate any injurious effect upon the Lake Erie level of diversion of water at Niagara Falls for water power. It was pointed out that diversion of water to the Chicago Drainage Canal, to the Erie Canal and for power plant purposes at Niagara Falls had considerably reduced the level at Lake Erie.

LAUGHS

"What do you think? Mrs. Zizzel, who never goes to church, has won the first prize in the church lottery!"

The Pessimist—He drank himself to death. Alas! The Optimist—But not until he had spent his money. Hurrah!

Little Girl—I want a cake of soap. Chemist—Have it scented? Little Girl—No. I won't have it scented. I'll take it with me; we only live around the corner.

She—Are you sure that you've never been engaged to anyone before? He—Certain. Why do you ask? She—Because you kiss as though you had had a lot of practice.

Borroughs—Mr. Merchant's out, you say? Why, he had an appointment with me here. That's very funny. New Office Boy—Yes, sir; I guess he thought it was, too. Anyways, he was laughin' when he went out.

Friend—I understand your wife's family trace their lineage back to William the Conqueror. Mr. Meek—I guess that's so. Old William was a terrible fighter, wasn't he?

"What's worrying you?" "Motor car," answered Mr. Chuggins. "It either goes so fast that I'm held up for speeding, or so slow that I'm warned not to obstruct traffic."

Mother—Johnny, don't you know it is wicked to throw away that bread and butter? If you live to my age you'll see the time when you'll wish you had it. Johnny—That's just what Aunt Lizzie, Cousin Jane and grandma always tell me. What good would it do to me then if I ate it up now?

Housekeeper—Lookie here! You are charging me two dollars for that whitewashing job, and yet it isn't six months since you did the same job for half that. Colored Artist—Yes'm; but you know cheap wo'k is po' wo'k; an' I did dat job so bad de las' time dat it done took me twice as long ter do it dis time.

DINERS PICK FRUIT

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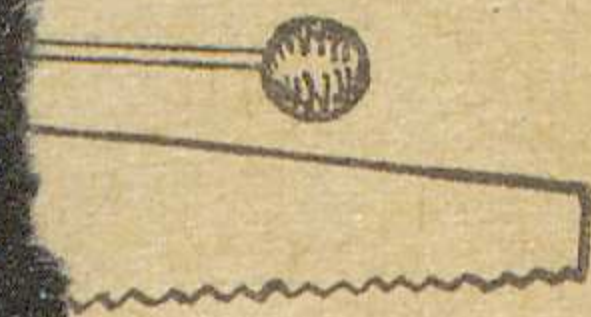
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St., New York

PARIS POPULATION TO REACH 6,000,000

The new plans for increasing the rank of Paris among the world's greatest cities are taking definite form through the proposal of several City Councillors to take in the suburbs in all directions, which will bring up the total population to more than 4,500,000. Under last year's census Paris had only 2,900,000, but 1,500,000 people can be found in the small towns which, although they have their own officials, do not have any line separating them from the capital.

If the extra suburbs are included, according to the city's statisticians, Paris easily will reach 6,000,000. Naturally this increase would mean a great revision of the city's rail and water traffic. Already Councillor Le Marchand is proposing that the city advance 2,000,000,000 francs for the construction of a great interior port system destined to make the French capital as great an interior water traffic center as Cleveland or Chicago. The plans include the deepening of the Seine between Paris and Havre and an additional widening of twenty feet to permit the passage of large cargo boats instead of the present tug and barge system.

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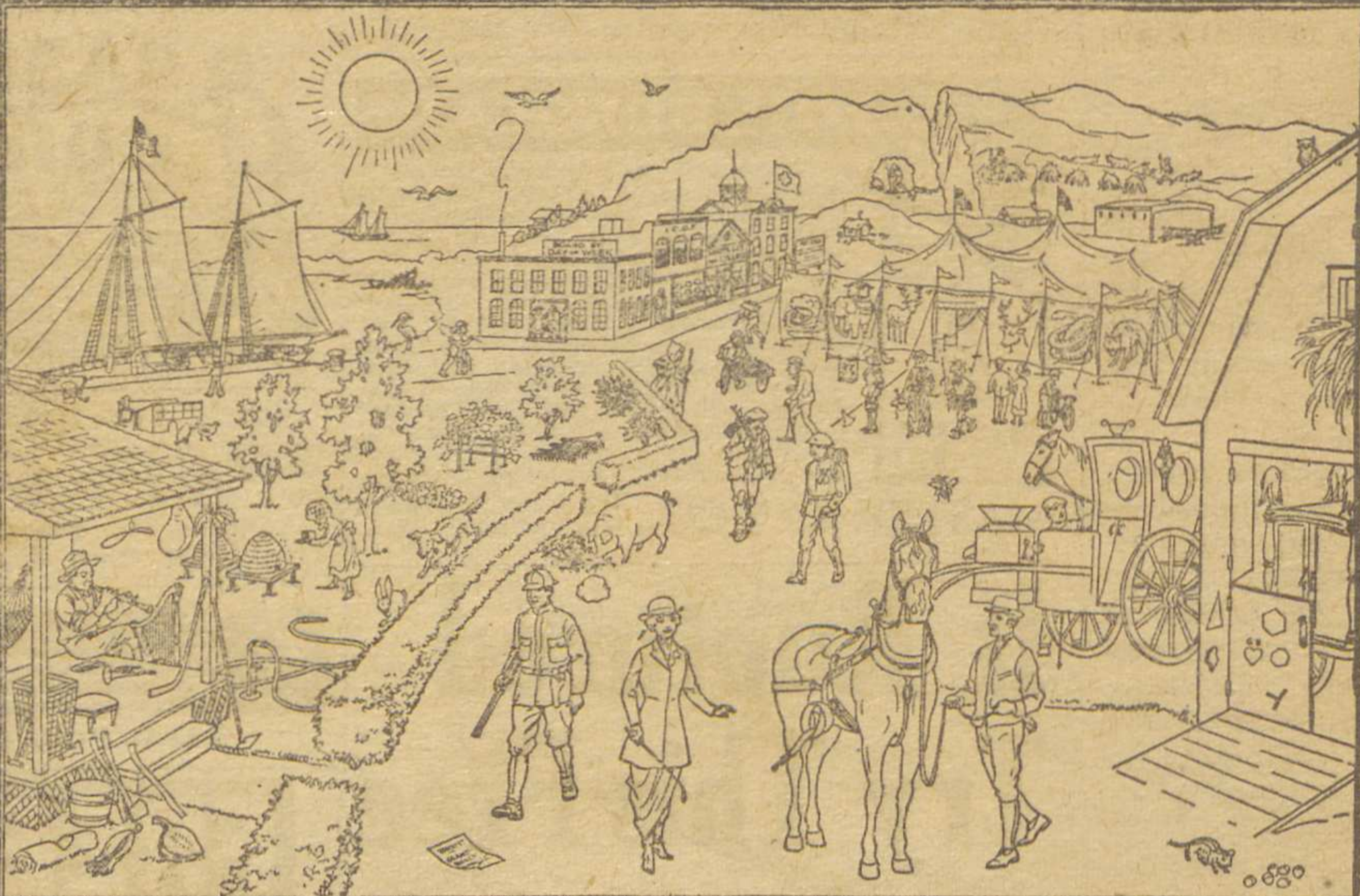
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How Many Objects Beginning with "H" Can You Find in This Picture?

\$3,000 in Prizes

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1st Prize	\$40	\$200	\$400	\$1500
2nd Prize	20	100	200	750
3rd Prize	20	50	100	375
4th Prize	20	35	65	175
5th Prize	10	25	40	100
6th to 15th Prizes --each	1	2	5	10

Read These Rules:

- Any person living in America (outside of Chicago, Ill.) except employees of Home Folks Magazine or their relatives, may submit an answer. There is no entrance fee.
- The answer having the largest number of words which correctly name objects beginning with the letter "H" will win first prize, and so on down the list of 15 prizes. The winning list will be made up from the words submitted by the contestants, and not controlled by any predetermined list of words selected by the judges as being the correct or "master" list. In case of ties for any prizes offered, full amount of the prize tied for will be awarded each tying contestant.
- Use only English words. Words of the same spelling but different meaning, and synonymous words will count only once. Either the singular or plural may be named, but not both. An object may be named only once, but its parts may also be named. Answers must not include hyphenated, compound or obsolete words, or words not applicable to objects shown in the picture. For each word that is incorrect, a percentage

- will be deducted from the total number of correct words. Webster's International Dictionary will be final authority.
- Write your list of words on one side of the paper only. Number words consecutively—1, 2, 3, 4, etc. An enlarged picture will be furnished free on request.
- Three judges independent of and having no connection with "Home Folks" Magazine will make the decisions and award the prizes. Their decisions must be accepted as final and conclusive. Prize winners will be notified immediately after the judges have made their decision, and names of the winners and winning list of words will be published in "Home Folks" as soon as possible after the close of the contest.
- Two or more people may co-operate in answering the puzzle. However, only one prize will be given to any household or group.
- All word lists must be received not later than office closing time, September 20, 1922, but subscriptions to Home Folks Magazine sent to qualify lists for the prizes will be accepted if received up to office closing time Oct. 7th.

The Horse wears a Harness. On the woman in the foreground there is Hat, Head, Hand. That's five words to start on. How many more can you find? Write down the "H" words as you find them. See how easy it is. Nothing is hidden. You can win \$1,500.

Open to Everybody!

It doesn't cost one cent to enter this contest or to win a prize. If you send no subscription to "Home Folks" and your list is the largest which correctly names the "H" objects in the picture, you will be awarded first prize of \$40.

How to Win the \$1500

Remember, you do not need to send in any subscriptions in order to win a cash prize. But if you send in \$1 for one 5-year subscription and the judges decide your list is best, you win \$200 instead of \$40. If you send in \$2 for two 5-year subscriptions, and are awarded first prize, you get \$400. But if you send us \$5 for five 5-year subscriptions, and win first prize, you get \$1500; for the second best list you would get \$750; for third best list \$375, etc., as shown in Class D prize column. Win all you can.

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How I increased my salary more than 300%

by
Joseph Anderson

I AM just the average man—twenty-eight years old, with a wife and a three-year-old youngster. I left school when I was fourteen. My parents didn't want me to do it, but I thought I knew more than they did.

I can see my father now, standing before me, pleading, threatening, coaxing me to keep on with my schooling. With tears in his eyes he told me how he had been a failure all his life because of lack of education—that the untrained man is always forced to work for a small salary—that he had hoped, yes, and prayed, that I would be a more successful man than he was.

But no! My mind was made up. I had been offered a job at nine dollars a week and I was going to take it.

That nine dollars looked awfully big to me. I didn't realize then, nor for years afterward, that I was being paid only for the work of my hands. My brain didn't count.

THEN one day, glancing through a magazine, I came across the story of a man just like myself. He, too, had left school when he was fourteen years of age, and had worked for years at a small salary. But he was ambitious. He decided that he would get out of the rut by training himself to become expert in some line of work.

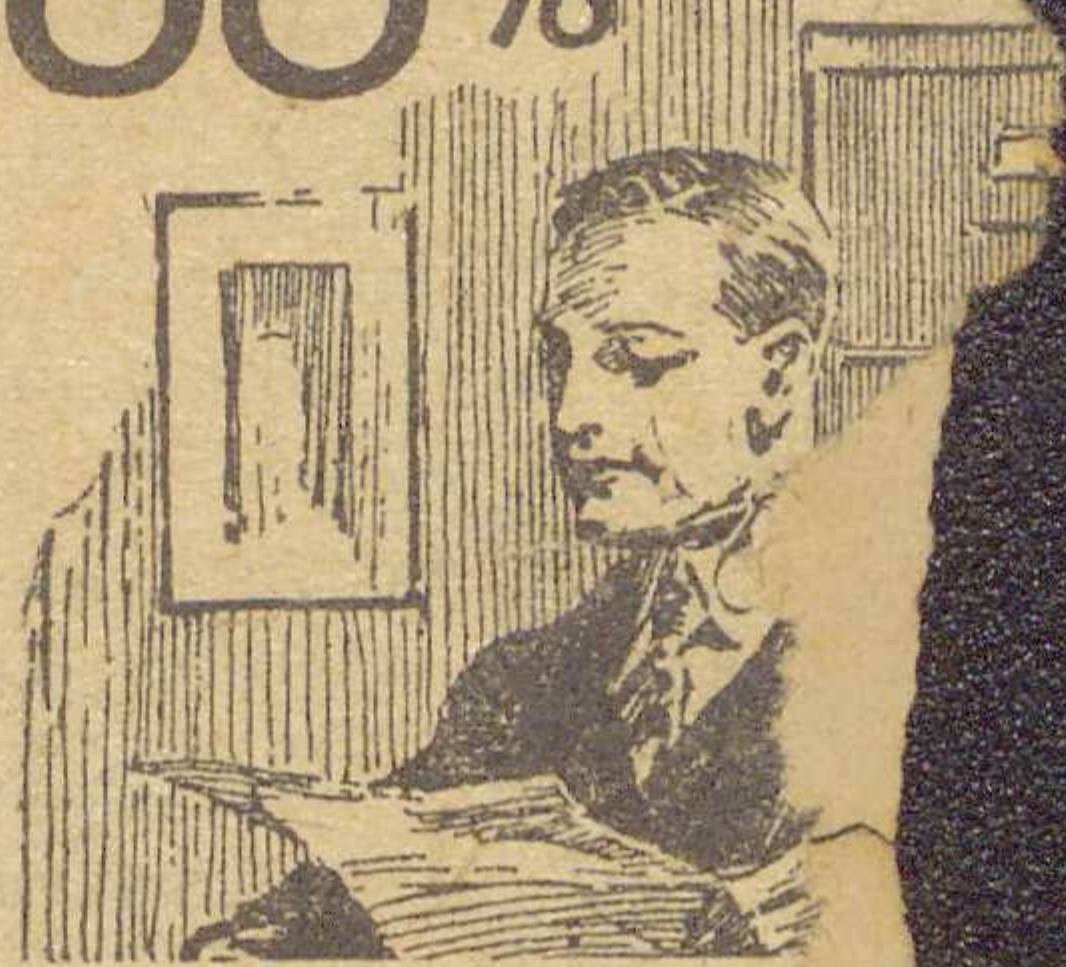
So he got in touch with the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton and started to study in his spare time at home. It was the turn in the road for him—the beginning of his success.

Most stories like that tell of the presidents of great institutions who are earning \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year. Those stories frighten me. I don't think I could ever earn that much. But this story told of a man who, through spare time study, lifted himself from \$25 to \$75 a week. It made an impression on me because it talked in terms I could understand. It seemed reasonable to suppose that I could do as well.

I tell you it didn't take me long that time to mark and send in that familiar coupon. Information regarding the Course I had marked came back by return mail. I found it wasn't too late to make up the education I had denied myself as a boy.

I was surprised to find out how fascinating a home-study course could be. The I. C. S. worked with me every hour I had to spare. I felt myself growing. I knew there was a bigger job waiting for me somewhere.

Four months after I enrolled my employer came to me and told me that he always gave preference to men who studied their jobs—and that my next



salary envelope would show of the improvement in me.

Today, my salary is more than it was when I began my studies. It meant a better home and all the luxuries that make life worth while.

What I have done, you can do. For I am just an average man. I had no more education to begin with than you have—perhaps not as much. The only difference is a matter of training.

TO every man who is earning less than \$75 a week, I say simply this:—*Find out what the I. C. S. can do for you!*

It will take only a minute of your time to mark and mail the coupon. But that one simple act may change your whole life.

If I hadn't taken that first step four years ago I wouldn't be writing this message to you today! No, and I wouldn't be earning anywhere near \$75 a week, either!

----- TEAR OUT HERE -----
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Without cost or obligation please explain how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject before which I have marked an X:

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- ☐ Electric Lighting & Railways
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- ☐ Telegraph Engineer
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- ☐ Toolmaker
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- ☐ Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ MINE FOREMAN or ENG'R
- ☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER
- ☐ Marine Engineer
- ☐ ARCHITECT
- ☐ Contractor and Builder
- ☐ Architectural Draftsman
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